

OUR REASONABLE  
FAITH

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PARK HAYS MILLER



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Our reasonable faith





# OUR REASONABLE FAITH

*By* ✓  
PARK HAYS MILLER



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TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY FATHER AND MOTHER

THE CHRISTIAN ATMOSPHERE OF WHOSE HOME  
NURTURED HEART AND LIFE  
IN THE DAYS OF BOYHOOD AND YOUTH  
WHEN THE MIND WAS TROUBLED BY DOUBTS  
THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY  
DEDICATED

“Being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you.” I Peter 3 : 15.



## PREFACE

This book is the effort of the writer to tell in simple language some of the thoughts concerning the Christian faith and the Christian life which have helped him in the secret battles of his own mind, and which have helped others like himself with whom he has dealt. The book is not a formal argument for the truth of the Christian faith; it is not a book on Christian evidences; nor is it an apologetic; although it is hoped that it will strengthen the faith of those who may be troubled about the truth of Christianity, and that it may give to its readers new reasons for the hope that is in them.

The four subjects which are brought together in this book have been discussed separately in many volumes, but the writer does not know of a single book which brings them together in this way for the ordinary reader. That there are so few quotations from books other than the Bible is due to the fact that most of the material has been made so much a part of the writer's own thinking that he has lost any consciousness of its connection with its original sources.

The book deals with four subjects which vitally concern the Christian—the Bible, in which the revelation of God to men has been preserved; great truths revealed in the Scriptures and proved by experience; the Commandments as the laws of conduct; and the Church, through which the truth has been preserved, by which the truth is taught, and in connection with which the Christian finds spiritual nurture and a field for service. Thus we have *The Christian's Book*, *The Christian's*

Faith, The Christian's Life Principles, and The Christian's Institution.

The book is intended for thoughtful readers who may not have access to larger volumes dealing with these subjects, or who may not desire an extended or profound discussion of them.

P. H. M.

FEBRUARY 15, 1922

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I  
THE CHRISTIAN'S BOOK

“But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” II Tim. 3 : 14, 15.

# OUR REASONABLE FAITH

## CHAPTER I

### CHRISTIANITY AND THE BOOK

There is a vital relation between the Christian religion and the Bible. The Bible as the Word of God and the religion of Jesus Christ go together. Jesus himself, the Founder of Christianity, left no room for doubt as to this fact. His attitude toward the Old Testament, which constituted the Scriptures of his day, his appeal to the Law and the Prophets, and his use of the Word of God, all indicate that the Scriptures and man's faith and spiritual life are vitally related.

The early disciples, who listened to Jesus' teaching and caught the spirit of his life, and who would naturally follow his example, gave the Scriptures an important place in their religion. As Jesus on the way to Emmaus, "beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, . . . interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself," so the apostles as well as Paul "reasoned . . . from the scriptures." When Philip found the Ethiopian reading in one of the books of the Old Testament, he, "beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus." A company of believers who are especially commended in the New Testament have this recorded of them: "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the

word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so." Evidently the early Christians believed that the Christian faith and the Word of God were vitally related. And where this conviction has prevailed, the gospel of Christ has flourished.

In reading the history of the Christian Church we constantly find fresh evidence of this vital relation between Christianity and the Bible. Much as personal piety may have been cultivated, when the Word of God has been neglected the true gospel has been overshadowed. But when men have turned to the Word of God, the gospel has shone forth again with new power.

Many influences were brought to bear upon the mind and heart of Augustine, the great Christian leader of the fourth and fifth centuries, in order to lead him from sin and unbelief to Christ and his service. We do not make light of a mother's life and teaching and prayers, or of the preaching of the great Bishop Ambrose, or of the part taken by many others in persuading Augustine of the truth, when we place the emphasis where it belongs—upon the Scriptures. The turning point in Augustine's life was when he heard the voice saying, "Take and read," and in response to that voice turned to the Scriptures and read, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." After all his study of philosophy and literature, the Bible became his Book.

Wyclif has been called the Morning Star of the Reformation. In the dark days when Roman Catholic traditions hid the gospel light, the gleams of truth which shone upon the mind and heart of that great teacher came from the Scriptures. Because he felt that England's need was the simple Word of God, he trained his



“poor preachers” and translated the Scriptures into the language of the people. Huss, the student of Wyclif’s writings and the heroic reformer of Bohemia, kindled the light of the true gospel afresh because he was a student and a preacher of the Word of God. Luther, the Father of the Reformation, found the gospel in the Bible. Zwingli, the Swiss reformer, found in the Scriptures the truth which he preached. Calvin, the great theologian and organizer of the Church of the Reformation, received his inspiration from the study of the Word of God. The story of the Church and the experience of Christians leaves no doubt that the Bible and the Christian faith are vitally related.

So evident is this great fact that a modern theologian whose views of the Scriptures are not altogether conservative, says, “The Christian revelation has been preserved in the Scriptures.”

Yet, just because Christianity and the Bible are so related, we may unconsciously get a wrong idea of the true character and place of the Scriptures. Vital as the relation is between the Bible and Christian faith, it is not the Scriptures themselves which are of so great importance. It is not the book, with its words and sentences, that has so vital a relation to our Christian faith and Christian life; it is the truth which God seeks to make known to us through the Scriptures. This truth is what gives life to our religion.

We might compare the Bible to a well of water. The water is what makes the well. For the sake of the water the wall is built and the pump is put in place. The wall is important, of course, for the wall prevents the earth from caving in and shutting us off from the water. The pump is important, of course, for the pump brings the water to the surface. But the water is the

great essential, and the wall and the pump are just means by which the water is brought within our reach. So the book that we call the Bible exists in order that the truth which it contains may be brought to our minds and hearts. The original writing of the Scriptures, the translation of the Bible from the original into our own language, and the printing of the Bible, are just means of bringing the truth within our reach. The great essential is the truth itself which the Bible has for us.

Paul emphasized this thought when he said, "For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Jesus taught this truth when he said, "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." In the book—the words of the book—the Jews expected to find life; but they were really to find life in Jesus, to whom the truth revealed in the Scriptures was intended to lead them. The written page, the words in their language, were the walls and the pump to bring to them the water of life.

If there were some other way just as effective as the Scriptures for preserving the truth, the Bible would not hold so important a place, but the fact is, as has been said, that "the Christian revelation has been preserved in the Scriptures." Therefore Christianity has, in this sense, become the religion of a Book. Individuals and the Church have drawn the living faith from the well of God's Word. Let its walls decay or its pump fall into disuse, and our Christian faith must lose its vitality and our Christian character deteriorate.

In thinking, then, about our Christian faith we may well begin with the consideration of the character and the purpose of the Bible, the Christian's Book.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BIBLE A LIVING BOOK

Our Bible is not written in a dead language. This fact is significant. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, with the exception of a few short passages in Aramaic, but we find that before the time of Christ it was translated into Aramaic, the common language of the Jews after the Exile, and into the Greek, the universal language after the conquests of Alexander. The New Testament was written in Greek, the universal language at the time of its composition, but we find that both the Old and the New Testaments were soon translated into Latin, which was the language of the Roman Empire. In England the Bible was translated into English; in other lands it was translated into the language of the people. This Book is not a book to be preserved in dead languages, perfect as those embalmed languages may be for the preservation of the truth; the Bible has always been translated into the living language of the people, for it is a living Book.

Even the English Bible has not remained in the form of its first translation. The story of the English Bible is a story of many revisions and new translations. Wyclif's Bible was followed by Tyndale's. In due time came the King James Version, which was a revision of the earlier English Bibles. For some three hundred years this was the accepted English translation. Then, partly because the English language, being a living language, had

changed, and partly because new manuscripts of the New Testament had been discovered, a new translation was demanded in order that the original Book might be printed in the language of our day. Thus we have the Revised Version. Nor does the effort to keep the Bible a living Book stop here. We have the Bible in modern English in order that it may be in the very language which we speak, the living language that falls from our lips in our daily conversation. The many translations of the Word of God in countless tongues and dialects are a testimony to the fact that the Bible is a living Book.

If the Bible possessed by the early Church in Hebrew and Greek has shown itself to be a living Book by its being translated continually into the living language of the people, we need not be surprised to discover that the Bible was a living Book in its origin. This Book did not originate in some writer's mind, find a willing publisher, and forthwith issue from the printing press. It is not machine-made. It did not find its source in the cell of a monk, or in the study of some world-detached student or scholar. This Book came out of human life. We make the Bible none the less God's Book when we say that it came out of the life of man. God's perfect revelation of himself was in the form of the Man Christ Jesus. This living Book came out of human experience, as God made plain to men the meaning of that experience. The great truths of Genesis—for that first book of the Bible reveals great truths—are taught, not in abstract precepts, but through the lives of men: Adam who sinned, Cain who slew his brother, Enoch who walked with God, Abraham the man of faith, Jacob whose character had to be transformed by the grace of God, Joseph the great example of noble living. Most of the Bible's great lessons are

taught through biography—individual, tribal, or national conduct being interpreted by the Spirit of God.

The prophets were not men who experienced great ecstasies and came to others with their visions, withdrawing immediately again into retirement. Isaiah, indeed, had his vision of God in the Temple. But he was the adviser of kings, a man who lived in the midst of stress and excitement and crisis, when he had to trust God although everything seemed to be against him. Jeremiah was not a prophet who simply dreamed dreams and saw visions; he stood in the midst of the crowd and denounced their sins, he went before kings with his message, he endured persecution for loyalty to his convictions. Out of the life of the nation came his messages. Amos was not a son of the prophets, trained as a professional messenger of God. He was a humble herdsman of Tekoa, who appeared in his shepherd's garb in the luxurious cities of Israel and in language bold and bald exposed the condition which the righteousness of God condemned. The prophets' messages stirred up such resentment, because they had so much to do with everyday life.

The Psalms of the Old Testament, too, came out of life. They express the thoughts of real men, their disappointments, their struggles, their aspirations, their discouragements, their problems of heart and life. Out of these experiences came their expressions of faith in God and their praise of his goodness.

The New Testament also came out of life. The Christ who lived among men was its inspiration. The Gospels tell what Jesus said and did in the world, as he dealt with men. Paul's epistles were written to meet practical situations, to correct errors in faith or conduct. Even the

book of Revelation, with its visions and its symbols—the book which seems to be farthest from our actual life experiences—was really written to help Christians who were enduring persecution. It was a message for life.

Thus, when the Bible ceases to be a living book, a book which the common people can and do read, when the Bible ceases to be a book for life and becomes a book for study for its own sake instead of a source of truth for practical faith and practical living, it will have become a denatured book. This living book which came out of human life and is ever to be translated into the living language of men, was written for the same purpose as the Gospel of John: “that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.”

Therefore in examining the form and character of the Bible, and learning more of its story, let us never think of ourselves as engaged in the study of Biblical anatomy in a dissecting room, but let us feel that we are examining the living body of Truth. The Bible is not a cadaver: it pulsates with life, and we should feel its heart beat even when we think about the externals of form and history.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BIBLE A UNIQUE BOOK

Many people think of the Bible as a book of miraculous stories, but the Bible itself is as marvelous as the events it narrates. This is no ordinary book which has preserved Christian truth for us. It is truly unique. Other religions have their sacred books, but these are not to be compared with the Bible.

We might readily conceive of a volume being formed through the centuries by the addition of new portions as the years passed, but we should not expect a book so formed to be more than a collection of separate and independent writings. The Bible, however, was written by many authors scattered through a period of probably sixteen centuries. It was written book by book, and these books were gradually added one to the other by common acceptance until they formed a single volume. Yet the resulting book, strange to say, possesses a marvelous unity. It is, in a true sense, one book.

We may explain this unity by the fact that the Bible is God's own revelation of his will to men. If God moved the various writers to give their messages to the world as the centuries rolled by, we should expect the book resulting from this process to reveal the development of one great purpose. Or we may say that if God was working out his great purpose in the lives of men in history, the messages of his messengers to the Jews, through whom he was preparing to bring the Saviour into the world, must make a book in which would be revealed one great

purpose growing clearer and clearer as the centuries passed. And when in the fullness of time the Son of God came as the revelation of God to men, the New Testament books were written about his life and teaching and work. Although by various writers, these books of necessity possess a remarkable unity because the same Christ is the heart of them all.

Any attempt to explain the unity of the Bible, produced through the centuries by many writers, each differing from the other, must recognize the great purpose of God as it has been revealed in sacred history. God's purpose in history and the Bible's messages to men have developed together. One mind and one purpose have guided them both. So this marvelous book is the one great interpreter of God's purpose in the world, and as such stands alone among the books of the world.

This book, which reveals the purpose of God as it has been wrought out in history, and as it is still to be wrought out, is also unique because its thoughts are beyond the thoughts of any other book. Its ideals are the highest, its philosophy the most profound, its moral teachings the purest. The highest ideals of to-day, the highest conception of the character of God which man now possesses, the finest code of morals that is conceived, can be traced back to their source in the Word of God as it is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

The Bible is unique in its history. Its very survival is a miracle. No book has had so many enemies. No book has suffered so many attempts to destroy it. Like Jeremiah's scroll it has been torn to pieces, and burned in the fire, but it still survives. It has been neglected, and lost, and buried, only to be found again, dug up



from ruins, and studied once more. It has been ridiculed and denied, and still it grips the minds and hearts and consciences of men. The story of its persistence is the most marvelous of all the book stories the world has known.

The Bible is unusual because of the variety of its readers and students. It belongs to every class. A famous merchant and his humble servant alike loved and studied this Word of God, and it spoke to the heart of each. The student of the ancient tongues searches out its meaning in the light of all his knowledge and scholarship, and feels repaid for his research and his diligence. The untutored Christian meditates upon its translation in his own language and finds food for mind and soul. The same Bible is preached in the cathedral and in the chapel, in the hall of learning and on the street corner, and everywhere it shows its power. Groups of men and women and boys and girls of every class and of every grade of mental development meet regularly to study this book.

What other book is universal geographically? What other book is studied in China and Japan, in India and Siam, in Europe and Australia, in Alaska and the isles of the sea? What other book is studied alike under the equator and in the frozen north? Strange book, indeed, that fits into the thoughts and the feelings and the purposes, and that proves to be practical in the lives, of all men everywhere! This is the one universal Book. Must it not be that this is so because the true Author of this Book is the Lord of all men?

This Book is unique also because of its influence. It is the greatest civilizing force the world possesses. Where this Book goes justice goes, high ideals go, unselfishness

goes, kindness goes. This Book has the power to transform individuals and communities and nations. Where this Book is wrought into the fiber of the mind and heart, you find a product which the world calls character, the one thing which gives stability to society, the one thing that men know is the foundation of right human relationships.

The persistency of the Bible is amazing. This Book, brought to completion almost two thousand years ago, is still a living book. In every century since it was written it has shown its vitality and its applicability to the age. Books go out of fashion; many of the standard books of a generation ago are laughed at to-day. But the Bible continues to hold its place. "Almost the only book still left to us is the New Testament," says a modern scholar. "It is only the New Testament that speaks the truth. It has proved itself right on every single issue." He was speaking in view of the World War which had recently come to its close.

The Bible is remarkable also because of its circulation. Up to the end of the year 1920 it had been printed in seven hundred and twenty-five languages and dialects. During the ten years prior to the year 1921 the Bible "appeared in a new language at the rate of one every six weeks." The whole Bible has been printed in one hundred and fifty-nine languages, the New Testament in one hundred and thirty-eight more, and portions of at least one book in four hundred and twenty-eight more. During a single recent year twenty-five million volumes of the Scriptures were printed by the various Bible societies and publishing houses.

The Christian may well be proud of his Book, this living, this marvelous Bible. But it is to be feared

that too many Christians cannot truly call this Book their own. Though they may own many printed copies of what they call the Bible, they do not really possess the Book. Of its character and content they know little; to its message they have scarcely listened; of its living power they have scarcely availed themselves. They need to be introduced to their own unique Book.

## CHAPTER IV

### EXAMINING THE BOOK

We have become so accustomed to the Scriptures being printed and bound in a peculiar way that we can almost immediately recognize a copy of the Bible. When we open the Bible it does not look like other books, for it has two columns of type on a page and verse divisions that give it an appearance all its own. Sometimes this peculiar appearance of the Bible as compared with other books seems to make it a forbidding book; it does not look interesting. But there are interesting facts to notice, even in connection with its peculiarities of form.

If we turn the pages of this book we discover that it is printed as if it were really two volumes bound in one, the first volume being between three and four times as large as the second, and the second having its own title page, as if it were a separate book. In some Bibles, too, the second part of the book begins to number the pages over again. Although the second part of the book is almost two thousand years old, it bears the title "New," for the first part, or volume, is known as the "Old Testament" or "Old Covenant," and the second volume is known as the "New Testament" or "New Covenant."

We know that while these two are really one book, the two parts stand in marked contrast one to the other. The Old Testament is the Bible of the Jews; the New Testament, added to the Old, makes the Bible of Christians. The Old Testament was written before Jesus was

born; the New Testament was written after Jesus had finished his earthly ministry. If we could see these two parts of the Bible in their original form we should discover a marked difference in their appearance, for the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, with a few passages in Aramaic, while the New Testament was written in Greek. This difference in language, of course, is not observable in the English Bible, but the difference in appearance in the original languages was decidedly marked.

As we examine the Old and the New Testaments we discover that they are made up of parts each of which bears a name or title of its own: Genesis, Exodus, et cetera, in the Old Testament; and Matthew, Mark, Luke, et cetera, in the New Testament. Each of these parts is known as a book. This is why we have the name "Bible," from the Greek word *biblia*, which means "books." The Bible consists of "the books" of the Holy Library of God.

In the Old Testament there are thirty-nine of these books, in the New Testament twenty-seven, making sixty-six in all. It has been suggested that the number of books can readily be remembered by thinking that the number of books in the Old Testament is made by writing a 3 and a 9, while the number in the New Testament is 3 times 9, or twenty-seven. Each of these books is in turn divided into chapters, although a few books consist of one chapter only.

Perhaps the most peculiar thing about the form in which the Bible is printed is that the chapters of the various books are again divided into verses, each of which is printed as a separate paragraph bearing a number. This form of printing the Bible makes connected

reading difficult, and detracts from its interest. For this reason in the Revised Version, while the verses are indicated by numbers, each verse is not printed as a separate paragraph, but the paragraphs indicate natural divisions of the thought.

This chapter and verse division, however, has served an important purpose. The Bible is not simply a book for reading, but a book for study and reference. In interpreting the Bible, Scripture is to be compared with Scripture. It is important, therefore, that we should be able readily to refer to or find any portion, in fact any particular sentence, of the Scriptures. The division into chapters and verses enable us to do this. Almost everyone knows John 3 : 16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." But if the Bible were not divided into chapters and verses, how could we find readily this or any other text?

There was a time when portions of Scripture could not be cited so easily or accurately. When Jesus wished to refer to a particular passage of Scripture he did not mention book, chapter, and verse, as we do, but said, "Have ye not read in the book of Moses, in the place concerning the Bush, how God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" Mark 12 : 26.

The present chapter and verse division was introduced into the Old Testament, in the Hebrew Bible, in the thirteenth century. The verse division of the New Testament was introduced into the Greek New Testament in 1551 by Robert Stephens, who was both a printer and a scholar. It is said that he made his verse divisions while journeying on horseback from Paris to Lyons. This fact

may explain why a verse division sometimes breaks into the middle of a sentence. The first complete Bible with chapter and verse divisions was the Latin Vulgate, printed in 1555.

There are other important divisions in the Bible which are not indicated for us. These should be noted. The books of the Old Testament and of the New Testament fall into a number of natural divisions or groups, as arranged in the English Bible.

The first five books of the Old Testament are frequently called the "books of Moses." A common name for them is the "Law," because they contain the Jewish law. They are also called the Pentateuch, which means "five books." Then follow twelve books, from Joshua to Esther, which are commonly known as the Historical Books. After these come the five Poetical Books, which are followed by the five Major Prophets, and these by the twelve Minor Prophets. Each of these divisions deserves special consideration.

The first five books of the Old Testament, or the Pentateuch, combine within themselves two important elements, history and law. They tell the early history of mankind, and particularly the story of the Hebrew people from the Creation until the death of Moses. Genesis tells the story of the Creation and the Fall, the Flood and the Dispersion of mankind, then gives special attention to the story of Abraham and his family up to the death of Joseph in the land of Egypt. Exodus tells of the "Exodus" or departure from Egypt and of the wanderings in the wilderness, but includes also the law delivered on Mount Sinai—the Ten Commandments, and the specifications for the Tabernacle—thus bringing in the second element in the Pentateuch. Leviticus, the

book "concerning the Levites," gives many detailed ceremonial and civil and sanitary laws which were established for the Hebrew nation. Numbers begins with the "numbering" of the people in the wilderness of Sinai, and tells more of the experiences of Israel in the wilderness; but it gives also many of the laws which were to govern the nation. Most of the book of Deuteronomy, so called because it is a "repetition of the law," is the farewell address of Moses. But it also, as the name indicates, gives again laws which were to govern the nation. The book closes with the death of Moses. Thus, we find, the first group of books is composed of five books, and so is called the Pentateuch. Moses is the dominant name in four of them, and all five were ascribed to him, and so they were called the books of Moses. They contain the law of Israel, and so are called "The Law."

The twelve books of history which follow the Pentateuch narrate the story of the Hebrews from the death of Moses to the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple, after the Babylonian Captivity. Joshua takes us from the death of Moses through the conquest of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. Judges tells the story of the Hebrews when they were more or less separate tribes under the rule of judges whose influence was felt in larger or smaller groups of tribes. The Book of Ruth gives us a beautiful story, the scene of which is laid in the days of the Judges and pictures the customs of that period. The two books of Samuel tell of the unifying of the nation under the kings, narrating the story from Saul to David. Here the two books of Kings take up the history and carry the account through the reign of Solomon, David's son, the division of the kingdom



under Solomon's son, Rehoboam, and the separate existence of the two kingdoms—the Kingdom of Israel in the north, and the Kingdom of Judah in the south with its capital in Jerusalem—until the fall of Samaria, the northern capital, to the Assyrians, and the fall of Jerusalem before the Babylonians and the captivity of Judah.

The books of Chronicles do not here take up the story and carry it on as one might expect. These two books are parallel to the books of Kings and, after introducing voluminous genealogies, begin with the time of David and repeat the story of Israel and Judah with emphasis upon idolatry as the cause of the nation's ruin. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah then take up the story at the close of the Babylonian Captivity and bring the remnant of Judah, henceforth to be known as the Jews, back to Jerusalem, which is rebuilt and the Temple and its worship restored. As The Book of Ruth gives us a picture of the days of the Judges, so The Book of Esther gives us a picture of the days of the Babylonian Captivity and the adventures of a Jew and his niece who were loyal to their traditions as Jews in the heathen land of the Medes and the Persians.

Many who are unfamiliar with the character of the Old Testament would naturally expect the next book or group of books to carry us on further in the history of the Jews. But this is not the case. Old Testament history takes us no further. When we turn to the next book we come to the first of the five poetical books, "Job." Many readers of the English Bible wonder that these five books are called poetical; they are unable to find in them meter or rime. But they are poetry, nevertheless. Hebrew poetry did not depend upon the kind of meter we are accustomed to, or upon rime. Hebrew poetry

had rhythm, and what is called parallelism of thought, by which is meant that one line is echoed in the next, sometimes in a comparison, sometimes in a contrast, sometimes in an additional thought. Each of these five books differs from the others. Job is a poem which deals with the problem of human suffering, a problem of every land and age. The Book of The Psalms, which follows Job, might be called the hymn book of the Jews. It consists of religious poems which reflect the experiences of the Hebrews all through their history. There are poems that deal with the Exodus from Egypt, Israel's experiences in the wilderness, their conflicts with their enemies, their captivity, their return from exile, their Temple worship. Many of them search the depths of personal and national religious experience. Some of the psalms are acrostic poems. One of these, Psalm 119, has the same number of sections as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and in each section every verse in Hebrew begins with the letter which is found at the head of that section.

Following The Psalms is the book of Proverbs which is, as its name indicates, a collection of wise sayings. Ecclesiastes, or The Preacher, also a poetical book, tells of the vain search in material things for that which will satisfy the heart of man. The last of the poetical books is The Song of Solomon, a poem of love. This is taken by some to be merely the poetic story of the love of a king for a beautiful maiden. Others take it to be typical of the love of God for Israel, in the case of the Jews, and the love of Christ for his Church, in the case of Christians. Still others hold it to be purely an allegory of Christ's love for the Church. Elements in Ecclesiastes and The Song of Solomon have led both among Jews and

Christians to debate concerning their place among the books of the Bible.

Following the Poetical Books come two groups of prophetic books, usually called the "Major Prophets," of which there are five, and the "Minor Prophets," of which there are twelve. The use of the terms "major" and "minor" has often led to the erroneous conclusion that the five major prophets were more important or greater in their prophetic power than the minor prophets. This is not the implication, for the Major Prophets are so named because the books are longer or larger than the Minor Prophets. These titles, too, apply to the books and not the authors, for Lamentations is not the name of a man but of a book.

Because the earlier books of the Old Testament follow one another in historic sequence, narrating the story of Israel, some readers of the Bible naturally expect that the prophets should take up the story of God's people where it was left off in the earlier books. It will help such readers to remember that the books of the prophets may be compared to the letters and speeches of statesmen in our history. The printing in an appendix to a history of the patriotic appeal of Patrick Henry, the inaugural address of Washington, Webster's reply to Hayne, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and other discourses or documents would not indicate that these belonged after the time of the main portion of the book. We would realize that these addresses should be read in connection with the body of the history, and so be fitted into their respective places. So it is with the prophets. These writings and discourses are to be fitted into their places on the background of the historical books: Isaiah in the reigns of such kings as Uzziah,

Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; Jeremiah in the last days of Judah's history; and Lamentations, being Jeremiah's outburst of sorrow over the fall of Jerusalem, leading up to the fall and Exile; Ezekiel and Daniel during the Captivity and Exile.

So, also, the Minor Prophets are to be placed upon the background of Hebrew history, although this cannot always be done with assurance. We can see Amos, however, delivering his powerful messages to the Northern Kingdom in the days of Rehoboam II, or Haggai and Zechariah encouraging the returned exiles in their efforts to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple; or Malachi, the last of the prophets, exhorting the people after the reforms of Nehemiah.

The books of the New Testament, like those of the Old Testament, also fall into five groups. The first group, composed of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, is biographical, giving four accounts of the life and work and teaching of Jesus. Next comes a single book, The Acts, a supplement to one of the Gospels, which takes up the story after the resurrection and, beginning with the ascension of Jesus, tells of the spread of Christianity until it reached the imperial city of Rome. The third division consists of fourteen epistles, or letters: Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews. These are often called the Pauline Epistles. While these epistles are called "Pauline," only thirteen are ascribed to Paul, the last of the fourteen, Hebrews, being anonymous. But many have felt that The Epistle to the Hebrews must have been written by some one in close sympathy with Paul,

if not by Paul himself. Following the Pauline Epistles are the General Epistles, seven in number: James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, and Jude. These epistles or letters are called "general" because they are not addressed to particular individuals or churches, as is the case with the other epistles. The last book of the New Testament belongs in a class by itself, being its one prophetic book. This is The Revelation of John, which was written to comfort the Church in the midst of conflict and trial. The book is often called the Apocalypse, from the Greek word in chapter 1: 1, which is translated "revelation."

In the New Testament, as well as the Old Testament, we must bear in mind that the books are not arranged in chronological order. Matthew tells the story of Jesus' birth and life and teaching and of his death and resurrection. Then Mark takes the reader back to the beginning of Jesus' ministry and gives the briefest and most vivid account of what Jesus did. Luke also takes the reader back to the birth of Jesus and his boyhood, and then tells of his ministry. John's Gospel is different from the other three, which are usually spoken of as the Synoptic Gospels because they give us "the same view"—synopsis—of the life and ministry of Jesus. John's Gospel takes us back into eternity before the world was made, when the Son was with the Father, announces the fact of the incarnation without telling the story of Jesus' birth, and then tells of the life and teaching of Jesus, narrating many events not mentioned in the three Synoptic Gospels.

The Acts, written by Luke, the author of the third Gospel also, continues the story after Jesus' ascension, as has been pointed out, telling of the development of

the early Church, the activity of the apostles, and especially the missionary journeys of Paul until he reached Rome, where he was held as a prisoner awaiting trial.

The Pauline Epistles, instead of continuing the story, are letters written by Paul (with the probable exception of Hebrews) as he went about establishing churches or revisiting and confirming those already established. So in the New Testament, as in the case of the Old, we have history supplemented by documents which must be fitted into their place in the history. The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to encourage Jewish Christians not to forsake the blessings of the gospel and go back to the bondage of Jewish laws and ceremonies. The General Epistles, too, should be read with the understanding that they are letters written by Christian leaders as they were engaged in their work of establishing the Church. Revelation, which stands alone, should be looked upon as the message of the living Christ to his Church in the midst of persecution.

## CHAPTER V

### HOW THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN AND PRESERVED

The Christian is concerned chiefly about receiving and understanding the truth which is contained in the Scriptures. It is much more important to eat and digest the food spread upon the table than it is to know how that food was produced or the process by which it was prepared in the kitchen. So it is vastly more important for us to know the truth the Bible contains than it is for us to know how the Bible was written and how it has been preserved. The Bible, however, being a living book, has an interesting biography, and a knowledge of this biography, even in outline, will enable us to appreciate the Book more. We are not therefore losing sight of the great purpose of the Bible and the use we should make of it, when we are considering how it was written and how it has been preserved for us.

In the days before the printing press, when books were both expensive and scarce, people depended more upon memory than they do to-day. What we commit to the written or printed page was then committed to memory. So, much of the material which has come down to us through the Scriptures was at one time committed to memory and passed on from generation to generation as oral tradition. The old contention, however, that the written Word of God must be of comparatively late origin because of the late development of writing is not well supported, for it has been discovered that long before the days of Moses writing was commonly practiced.

The most ancient writings which have come down to us were upon tablets or bricks of clay, which were hardened by burning. While the clay was soft, marks were made upon it by means of a sharp instrument which left a triangular impression. Hence this writing has been called "cuneiform," which means "wedge-shaped." This kind of writing is six thousand years old. Tablets written in the days of Abraham have been preserved and recently dug up. Great libraries whose shelves were filled with these tablets, have been discovered. One of these libraries, discovered at Tel-el-Amarna, in Egypt, contained clay tablets bearing the correspondence of the Syrian governors with their Egyptian masters. These tablets were written about 1400 B.C., which would be about the time of Moses. Stone also was used in writing; the Ten Commandments were written on stone. One of the most remarkable ancient records is the Moabite Stone, inscribed probably about 850 B.C. by Mesha, king of Moab, in which he told of his victory over Omri, king of Israel. This stone was discovered in 1868. Writing tablets of wax were commonly used in ancient times, as were also tablets of wood. But the manuscripts of the Old Testament were written upon skins which were cut and fastened together to form a scroll. In some localities papyrus, a kind of paper made from the papyrus reed which grew in Egypt, was most used. Papyrus manuscripts have been found which were written as long ago as 2500 B.C.

In the actual preparation and writing of their manuscripts the authors of the books of the Bible must have used methods varying according to the character of the book itself and the disposition of the writer. In some



of the historical books of the Old Testament, the authors drew upon traditions which had come down from more ancient times, and also made use of ancient or current records. For example, The Book of Joshua quotes The Book of Jasher, Josh. 10 : 13, as does II Sam. 1 : 18. This seems to have been a book of ancient poems. Ezra quoted from the court records of the Medes and Persians. Both Kings and Chronicles indicate that they were written with documents in hand, for we read that the rest of the deeds of the kings to whose reigns these books refer were to be found in records which were then available. The Old Testament thus refers to the following sources of material: The History of Samuel the Seer, The History of Nathan the Prophet, The History of Gad the Seer, The Chronicles of King David, The Visions of Iddo the Seer, The History of Shemaiah the Prophet, The History of Iddo the Seer, and others. The writers evidently selected what fitted their purpose. But we can well imagine that the prophets, with their hearts set on fire by the conditions which they saw and their minds illuminated by the Holy Spirit, delivered their messages hot from the heart. And these messages were afterwards written down and thus preserved. Jeremiah, we are told, dictated his messages to Baruch, his scribe, and when this scroll was destroyed even a fuller record of the prophet's messages was made and preserved. Jer. 36 : 4, 27, 32. The psalms were written by various authors, much as our hymns and poems are composed. Probably at first some of them may have been stored in the memory and repeated again and again, and finally committed to writing. Some of them were probably written out carefully in the first

place. These psalms were finally gathered together and arranged in the book of The Psalms.

Most of the books of the Bible were formed more or less independently of the others. Only gradually were they brought together into the collection which was generally accepted by the Jews as containing all the writings which should be included in the sacred Scriptures. Ezra, the scribe, no doubt had much to do with the preservation and arrangement of the Old Testament Books, when the Jews returned to their country after the Exile.

In the Hebrew Bible the books were not arranged as in our own Bible, but were in three groups or divisions: The Law, The Prophets, and The Sacred Writings. The Law included the five books of the Pentateuch. The Prophets included Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, which came to be known as the former prophets, and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve Minor Prophets, which were called the latter prophets. The Sacred Writings, the third group of books in the Hebrew Bible, included Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Lamentations, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. The collection of the Old Testament books was completed by about the beginning of the first century B.C.

As has already been pointed out, there were translations of the Hebrew Scriptures before the Christian Era. The Old Testament was translated into Greek for the use of Greek-speaking Jews, and this version, known as the Septuagint because it was said to have been made by seventy or seventy-two scholars, has preserved for us the Old Testament in a Greek form. Later the Jews no longer spoke the old Hebrew in which

their Scriptures were originally written, Aramaic had become their common language, and it was necessary to translate or interpret in Aramaic the Hebrew Scriptures for the worshipers in the synagogue. Such a free translation or interpretation in Aramaic was known as a Targum. The Targums have thus preserved for the world the Old Testament Scriptures in Aramaic.

It can readily be seen that after the establishment of the Christian Church the Old Testament would be preserved through two channels: The Jews would preserve it as their Scriptures; the Christians would preserve it as a part of their Bible.

The New Testament came into existence not many years after Jesus' earthly ministry came to an end. The apostles were commissioned to go into all the world and teach all nations to observe all the things that Jesus had commanded them. Thus they were called upon to tell the story of Jesus' life and teaching. This they could readily do, for they had been with Jesus and learned of him. The events of his life and the words that he had spoken were engraved deeply upon their minds. One who heard from the apostles the story of Jesus' life and teaching would repeat the testimony to others. Thus by word of mouth the gospel spread. Accordingly it must not be insisted that the written Word is essential for salvation; the Christian Church and the gospel existed before any of the New Testament books were written.

But the word-of-mouth method of transmitting the truth is precarious. Tradition becomes untrustworthy. All hearers do not listen with the same care, understand with the same clearness, remember with the same exactness, or repeat with the same accuracy. There is a

tendency, even unconsciously, to add to what has been heard, or to take away from it. So in the early Church, tradition became unreliable and therefore the account of Jesus' life and teaching was committed to writing. Many, however, undertook this task who were not qualified for it. Of all the first century accounts of Jesus' life and teaching, only four have been preserved for us in the New Testament. Luke tells us that his Gospel was written after careful research. He was a historian who examined documents, traced genealogies, looked up records, interviewed witnesses, and then wrote his Gospel. Mark, the author of the Second Gospel, was, we are told, not only a fellow worker with Paul, but also a companion of Peter, and the stories of Jesus and his teaching which fell from the lips of that zealous apostle were committed to paper by Mark in order to preserve them for future generations, thus giving us the most vivid picture of Jesus which is to be found in the New Testament. On the other hand, Matthew, the author of the First Gospel, makes much of Jesus' discourses and has preserved for us at length much that Jesus said, in addition to an account of his life.

Luke was a historian, and it has been said that his second book, *The Acts*, is one of the best pieces of historical writing that has ever been done. This book was written after careful research and as a result of personal observation, for some of the events are described as by an eyewitness.

The Gospel of John, so different from the other Gospels, was written more as an interpretation of the life and teaching and personality of Jesus. The Fourth Gospel indicates that, in addition to the more simple

narratives of the three Synoptic Gospels which gave the facts concerning Jesus and his teaching and left the reader to draw his own conclusion, there was need of an interpretation of these facts and of other facts which, not given in the Synoptic Gospels, are included in the Gospel of John. So the Fourth Gospel was written.

At first it may seem strange that the epistles of the New Testament, which discuss some of the essential principles of Christianity, were written before the Gospels which tell the story of Jesus, the Founder of Christianity. But it must be remembered that the gospel and the Church both existed before any of the books of the New Testament were written. So, through the testimony of the apostles and others who heard the truth from them, the life and teaching of Jesus became known to all the followers of Christ. But, in part because the teaching of the early Church was oral, and so depended upon teachers rather than upon a written record which would not change as it passed from hand to hand, errors both in faith and practice crept into the churches. So letters were written to correct these errors and to explain Christian truth which was not clearly understood. The letters of Paul were addressed to particular churches, such as the church in Thessalonica, or Ephesus, or Philippi, or Corinth. They were read, however, in other churches also and thus were given wider circulation. Under Paul's direction other workers were engaged in the oversight of the churches. To guide them in their work Paul wrote such letters as have been preserved for us in his First and Second Epistles to Timothy and his Epistle to Titus. Or such an incident as the conversion of a runaway slave in Rome led to Paul's sending this runaway slave back to

his Christian master with a letter which would lead the master to treat the slave as a brother, and the slave to serve his master with all fidelity. This is the story of the Epistle to Philemon. So the General Epistles were written by the Apostle John, the Apostle Peter, James and Jude, the brothers of Jesus, as occasion called for these messages. The Revelation of John was called forth by the vision which John had as an exile on the Isle of Patmos. The book was sent to the seven churches of Asia, as a part of Asia Minor was then called, for their warning and their encouragement.

These various books of the New Testament would be circulated, and copies made for use in the different churches. A group of Christians would have some of the Gospels and some of the Epistles. When a copy of another of these books was secured, this would be added to the collection already in hand. In this way, gradually, a collection of books came to be recognized as belonging with the Old Testament Scriptures, as the inspired Word of God. It took many years to collect all the books of the New Testament and to determine just what books were entitled to a place in the Scriptures. In some places a certain book might not be so well known as in other localities. But at last the twenty-seven books which now constitute the New Testament came to be generally accepted by the Christian Church as the true Word of God.

Even when the New Testament had been formed by gathering together in one collection the twenty-seven books which constitute it, the preservation of this New Testament library was no simple matter. Before the days of printing, books had to be copied by hand. This was a slow, expensive process, and limited the number

of copies. Manuscript copies of the Bible would become worn out, just as books are worn out to-day by constant use. Thus the originals would disappear, and only copies would be preserved. These copies in turn would be worn out and only copies of them preserved.

Strange things happened to some of these old manuscripts. Many of them were kept in ancient monasteries and, because writing materials were scarce, the monks would use the pages of a manuscript of the Scriptures as writing paper. Sometimes they would write across or between the lines.

One of the most thrilling tales connected with the story of the Bible is that of the discovery of what is known as the Sinaitic manuscript. On Mount Sinai, in the Desert of Arabia, is an ancient convent bearing the name of St. Catherine. Here Dr. Tischendorf, the famous New Testament scholar, went to seek manuscript treasures. In 1844 he discovered in a wastebasket forty-three leaves of an old manuscript. This he found to be a part of a copy of the Septuagint, or the Greek version of the Old Testament. In 1853 he visited the monastery again, but to no purpose. In the year 1859, however, he discovered the rest of that old manuscript, containing one hundred and ninety-nine leaves of the Septuagint and the entire New Testament in Greek. This is the most complete manuscript of the New Testament which has ever been found. It is also one of the two oldest manuscripts of the New Testament, if not the oldest, in existence. It had been preserved since the middle of the fourth century. Think of a copy of the Bible kept through fifteen hundred years! Tischendorf himself believed that this was one of the fifty copies of the Scriptures which Emperor Constantine had

ordered to be prepared for the churches of Constantinople in the year 331. It is generally agreed that the manuscript was written certainly before the end of the fourth century.

New discoveries of manuscripts of the Scriptures are being made from time to time. One of the latest available reports indicates that there are now known to be in existence over one hundred uncial Greek manuscripts—that is, manuscripts written in capital letters—which are the oldest manuscripts, and three thousand cursive manuscripts, or manuscripts written in a running hand. Of course, these various manuscripts are of larger or smaller portions of the Scriptures.

It may seem strange that the oldest manuscripts of the Bible are manuscripts of the Greek Bible. The oldest manuscript of part of the Hebrew Old Testament belongs to the tenth century A.D. The oldest manuscript of the entire Hebrew Old Testament is dated A.D. 1010. But the Hebrew text or wording of the Old Testament “has come down to us practically unchanged since at least the second century of the Christian Era.”

The ancient manuscripts, copied and recopied by hand, have kept for us the writings of the authors of the books of the Bible. In view of the discoveries of ancient manuscripts which are being made from time to time, no one can tell what old manuscripts may yet be unearthed to confirm the accuracy with which God’s Word has been preserved in the world. How the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament were passed on to us in the English Bible will be considered in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER VI

### OUR ENGLISH BIBLE

The Bible has often been a lost book. In the days of Josiah, king of Judah, when workmen were engaged in the repair of the Temple, they discovered a copy of the Law, which was the Bible of that day. It had been lost in the rubbish of the neglected Temple. Again, during the Exile, the Bible, so far as it had then been written, was once more a lost book. Ezra was the man who saved the Scriptures for the nation. When the Law, preserved by this scribe in Babylon, was read to a great public assembly at Jerusalem, it was a new book to the people. These are not isolated cases; similarly in the experience of individuals, of families, of communities, and of nations, the Bible has become a lost book because it has been unopened by the individual, has become dust-covered in the home, and has been ignored and forgotten by the community and the nation. The casting of pages of the Bible into the wastebasket of the Convent of St. Catherine reminds us of what has only too often happened to the Word of God at the hands of men.

There have been times also when the Bible has been lost in the obscurity of an unknown tongue. God's Word cannot be understood until it is translated into the living language of the people. Every time the Bible is translated, it is like finding God's Word again. This rediscovery of the Scriptures through its translation into the language of the people has been repeated

again and again. The translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, was a rediscovery of the Word of God for Greek-speaking Jews who were scattered among the nations. The translation into Aramaic was a rediscovery of the Book for the Aramaic-speaking Jews of Palestine. When the conquest of Rome made Latin the common language of the West, the Bible was rediscovered by its translation into Latin.

There were a number of Latin translations, but one of these, by the famous scholar Jerome, in the fourth century A.D., supplanted all others and became the commonly accepted version and, with some modifications, was declared to be the authoritative Bible of the Roman Catholic Church. It was accordingly called the "Vulgate," from the Latin word *vulgo*, "to make common." This is still the authorized Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

The translation of the Bible into English was not due to the encouragement of the Roman Church. That Church has rather feared the translation of the Bible into the language of the common people, on the ground that they were not to be trusted to interpret it. Only heroism that was ready to endure the test of martyrdom secured for us the Bible in our own language.

In the year 1213, King John of England was forced by a ban to recognize the sovereignty of the pope, who accordingly demanded the payment of a rental by the English king. For more than one hundred years this rent was irregularly paid. Then thirty years passed in which no rental was paid. But in 1365, in the reign of Edward III, Pope Urban V suddenly demanded the payment of back rental. There was consternation among the advisers of the king. Did the English

sovereign dare to refuse the pope's demands? At this critical time England found her champion in John Wyclif, a priest of the Church and a famous scholar of Oxford. He declared that the pope had no claim upon England. This champion of English independence became also the champion of religious liberty.

Wyclif was a man of insight. He realized that the authority of the Scriptures in religion must be set over against the authority of the pope. England's salvation depended upon the people's knowledge of the Scriptures. He himself had been a student of the Word of God, and had preached Scriptural sermons in his church. In order that Biblical preaching might be heard by the people everywhere he organized his "poor priests," who went about preaching the Word of God. But how were they to preach the Word of God when they did not have the Bible in their own language? And how were the people to read God's Word for themselves so long as the only available Bible was the Latin Vulgate, written in an ancient tongue which they did not understand?

Portions of the Bible had been translated into English, and the Psalms in English were in existence; but there was no English Bible. Wyclif accordingly set himself to the task of translating the Latin Vulgate into the language of the common people. He completed the translation of the New Testament, his friend Nicholas of Hereford translated a large part of the Old Testament, and some one, perhaps Wyclif himself, completed the translation. The entire Bible was thus rendered into English in 1382. This was the first complete English Bible. The whole was later revised, partly by Wyclif himself, but the task was not com-

pleted and the book published until four years after Wyclif's death.

Published, it should be noted, does not mean printed, for the printing press had not been discovered and Wyclif's English Bible, like the ancient manuscripts themselves, had to be copied by hand. This made the Bible expensive.

There was great demand for Wyclif's Bible. Copies could not be made fast enough. It is said that a load of hay was paid for the privilege of reading one of the books for a day. But the Church authorities did not want the people to read the Bible for themselves. They had a law passed forbidding anyone to read Wyclif's Bible upon penalty of the forfeiture of land, cattle, life, and goods by their heirs forever. Nevertheless, the English Bible was copied and circulated and read. So many copies were produced and preserved that there are in existence to-day one hundred and seventy manuscripts of this Bible.

Wyclif translated his English Bible from the Latin Vulgate. Because the original Scriptures were written in Hebrew and Greek, it was felt that the English translation should be made out of the original tongues. Accordingly, more than one hundred years after Wyclif's Bible was first published, William Tyndale undertook to translate the Bible into English from Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. The way had been prepared for him by Wyclif's translation, and he himself was peculiarly fitted for his task. He is said to have been master of seven languages, among them Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and English. Thus he could make good use of Wyclif's and Jerome's translations, in addition to the available texts in the original languages. Compelled

to leave England, Tyndale continued his work on the Continent. At last, after many mishaps due to persecution, the translation of the New Testament was completed. The invention of the printing press made it possible for the new translation to be produced speedily in large numbers. In spite of difficulties Tyndale succeeded in printing three thousand copies of the New Testament which were shipped secretly to England. Altogether eighteen thousand copies of the New Testament were printed. Some were bought by eager readers, others were purchased in order that they might be burned. So successful was the effort to destroy Tyndale's translation of the New Testament that only two copies of the eighteen thousand copies printed are in existence to-day. One of these lacks the title-page, and the other is much less complete. The translation of the Old Testament was undertaken, but before it was completed Tyndale was betrayed by a supposed friend, a Roman Catholic, and he was strangled to death and his body burned. It was a high price which our forefathers paid for our English Bible.

In spite of the bitter opposition to the translation of the Bible into English, the demand for the Word of God in the language of the people led in 1534 to the request to the king, by a convocation under Archbishop Cranmer, to choose learned men who would translate the Bible into English and deliver it into the hands of the people. The result was the Bible of Myles Coverdale, which appeared in 1535 and leaped into popularity. It was soon printed with the king's license. Little did those who opposed Tyndale's New Testament and welcomed Coverdale's Bible realize that Coverdale had himself been associated with Tyndale. Coverdale did not trans-

late from the original languages but made use of such translations as Tyndale's English Bible, Luther's German Bible, and the Zurich Bible, which was also in German, printed in 1530, and largely the same as Luther's.

Next John Rogers, using Tyndale's translation of the books of the Old Testament from Genesis to II Chronicles, Coverdale's version of the rest of the Old Testament, and Tyndale's New Testament, printed in 1537 a translation of the Bible under the name of Thomas Matthew. The Matthew's Bible was now the best English Bible yet made, and was circulated by the authority of Henry VIII.

Still, Matthew's Bible was not altogether satisfactory, and Coverdale was commissioned to prepare another revision. He employed Greek and Hebrew scholars to aid him, and with their help the new text was prepared. The plan was to print the book in Paris, but the Inquisition interfered with the progress of the work. The sheets already printed, however, were saved and the presses shipped to England, where the work was finished in 1539. This Bible, because of its great size and imposing form, was called the Great Bible. It proved to be popular, and was placed in the churches where it could be read by the people.

When Edward VI became king in 1547, English Bibles were printed in great numbers, but Mary Tudor, a Roman Catholic, who succeeded him in 1553, prohibited the use of the English Bible and removed it from the churches. At this time a number of earnest Protestants fled to Switzerland, where they found refuge in Geneva. There they planned to prepare a new English version of the Scriptures. This was based upon

the Old Testament of the Great Bible and Tyndale's latest new Testament. This English Bible, which appeared in its complete form in 1560, was known as the "Genevan Bible." In this book the present chapter and verse divisions appeared for the first time. It also contained marginal notes. So popular was this English version of the Bible that it passed through one hundred and sixty editions, and continued to be printed even after the publication of the Authorized Version in 1611.

Although the Genevan Bible was a popular version, the Church authorities in England were not satisfied with a Bible translated by English fugitives in Switzerland, and so a new revision of the Great Bible was planned. A number of scholars, among them nine bishops, prepared a new version which was published in 1568. This was known as the Bishop's Bible. Because this Bible was issued by the Church authorities it displaced the Great Bible in the churches.

Another English Bible appeared in the first decade of the seventeenth century, for very different reasons. The Roman Catholic Church found that there was a great demand for the Bible in English, but was not satisfied with the translations which had been made outside its own fold. It must have its own version. Accordingly the translation of the Bible into English for Catholics was begun in Douai, France, and for that reason the finished translation became known as the Douai Bible. This of course was not a translation out of the Hebrew and Greek, but from the Latin Vulgate which is the Authoritative Bible of the Roman Church. The Douai Bible was printed in 1609-1610.

James I came to the throne of England in 1603. He was a student of the Scriptures, and had at one time

begun the translation of The Psalms. This fact opened the way for a new translation. There were now in England the Great Bible, the Genevan Bible, and the Bishop's Bible, but when a Puritan leader suggested to James that none of these versions was satisfactory and there was need of a new translation, the king eagerly welcomed the suggestion. Fifty-four scholars, the most learned men of that day, were appointed for the work, although the records show the names of only forty-seven. Meeting in six groups, two at Westminster, two at Oxford, and two at Cambridge, these scholars spent about six years in private study and in work together. Then nine months were spent by all together in London, in the final work of revising. In 1611 the results of this great undertaking were seen in the printing of the King James Version of the English Bible, which is often called "The Authorized Version," although there is no record of its being authorized by either king, parliament, or council. After changes and corrections in 1614 and in 1629, it appeared in its final form in 1638. This is the King James Version of today, which for three centuries was the commonly accepted English Bible. This Bible has been called "the standard of perfect English," and has been loved and is still loved by millions of readers. No one can measure the influence of this marvelous English translation of the Scriptures.

Three centuries, however, brought many changes. As has been pointed out in a previous chapter, old manuscripts of the Scriptures, such as the Sinaitic manuscript found by Tischendorf in Mount Sinai, were being discovered. When the King James Version was translated there was not a single uncial manuscript



known, while to-day there are over one hundred uncial manuscripts of the Scriptures available. These manuscripts helped scholars to get nearer to the original text of the Bible. Besides this, the Hebrew language was better understood than in the days of the making of the King James Version. Added to this was the fact that three centuries had brought changes in the English language itself. The meaning of words had altered, and the English Bible did not now say to modern readers quite what it said in 1611 when the translation was originally made. Toward the end of the last century there was a growing feeling on the part of scholars that advantage should be taken of the manuscripts discovered since the translation of 1611 and the increased knowledge of the tongues in which the Bible was originally written, to produce a new version which would translate the Scripture into the English language of to-day.

Accordingly, in 1870, the Church of England undertook a revision of the English Bible. The revision company was composed of scholars of all denominations. As in the case of the committee originally appointed by King James, these scholars numbered fifty-four. Twenty-seven of them were in the Old Testament company, and twenty-seven in the New Testament company. The New Testament company began its work on June 22, 1870, and a few days later, on June 30, the Old Testament company entered upon its labors. The companies met at stated intervals, holding sessions for ten days and working six hours a day. Thus the whole Bible was revised twice. At the same time there were American scholars who were interested in the revision of the Bible, and an American committee was appointed to coöperate with the British committee.

The committee began its work in 1872. The results of the work of the British committee and of the American committee were exchanged for criticism and suggestion. And thus, after ten and a half years of labor on the part of the British New Testament Company, on May 17, 1881, the Revised New Testament was put on sale in England. Three days later it was for sale in America. In less than a year almost three million copies of the Revised New Testament were sold. The Old Testament was issued in 1884, after fourteen years of labor. In 1885 the whole Revised English Bible appeared.

One would think that this might end the story. But many of the suggestions made by the American revisers were not accepted by the British committee. The American committee, however, had promised not to issue a revision of its own until fourteen years had passed after the publication of the completed Revised Version. Near the end of the fourteen years, on August 26, 1901, the survivors of the American committee, having kept full records of its recommendations, after further study issued what is known as the American Standard Version. Many consider this to be the most perfect English Bible in existence.

Even this is not the end of the story of the Bible in English. In recent years the Bible has appeared in modern English. These translations are unlike the Revised Version and the American Standard Version in one respect. The revised versions were revisions of the King James Version, while the newer translations are entirely independent, the translators, unhampered by any other versions, endeavoring to translate the original Hebrew and Greek into the language of the common

people of to-day. All these are efforts to make the Bible more readily understood by English-speaking people.

Thus through the study, the toil, the devotion, the unswerving purpose, and even the bloodshed of many lovers of God's Word, through many centuries, we have the Bible in our own tongue so that we may read it and understand it.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ULTIMATE TRANSLATION

The purpose of the Scriptures is to translate the thought of God into the thought and feeling and life of men. The first stage in this complex process is the translation of the thought of God into human language. This first stage has been a long and tedious process. God has often spoken to men through their experience, and the events of history pondered over by men whose minds were illuminated by the Spirit of God, brought thoughts to their minds which under the guidance of the Holy Spirit were expressed in human language. Sometimes God spoke so directly to his messengers that they declared, "Thus saith the Lord." They became God's spokesmen, or prophets. All this was with the purpose of expressing the thought of God in human language.

This revelation of God's thoughts and their expression in human language was a long, slow process. The reader of the Bible soon discovers that there is what may well be called "progressive revelation." As a language in which God could speak to men was developed, the message became clearer and clearer. Jesus himself said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." All through the Old Testament, God had been revealing his thoughts to men as they were able to bear them. It would be no simple matter for the infinite God to find language in which to speak to finite men. How can the philosopher

teach his thoughts to the infant until that infant has acquired a language capable of conveying the philosopher's thought? In the Old Testament we see the growing clearness of the translation of God's thought into human language, as man's power to receive the truth increased.

Take as a single example the purpose of God to redeem sinners through the sacrifice of his Son. Genesis tells of God's promise in Eden that a descendant of Eve should conquer the Tempter. God promised Abraham to bring a great blessing to all nations through him. The sacrifices of the law, prescribed in the Pentateuch, pointed to the sacrifice for sin which some day should be offered, once for all, in the death of "the Lamb of God." The Old Testament prophets looked forward with increasing clearness of vision to the coming of the Messiah, and The Book of Isaiah marvelously characterizes him in its fifty-third chapter. The Gospels tell of the fact of his coming, and of his character and teaching and work. The Epistles go further, and interpret the nature of his person and the meaning of his work. In this we see an illustration of the long process by which God translated his thought into the language of men.

Or take God's revelation of his character to men. As we turn the pages of the Scriptures in their historical order we find a more and more exalted conception of the character of God, until as we listen to Jesus Christ we begin to conceive of God as he is.

The words of a language must have meaning stamped upon them through experience, before they can translate the thought of God into human speech. It is not mere imagination to believe that God prepared the

Greek language in order that the New Testament revelation might find expression in its words and constructions which had been shaped to be molds into which he would pour his thought. And yet because God's thought could not be fully translated into words, and so prophets must fail as God's messengers, in the fullness of time God sent his own Son to translate his thought in terms of life itself, a life that no words can adequately describe and no language accurately characterize.

"We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father," wrote John, and the writer of Hebrews says, "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

The writer is not forgetting the meaning which was impressed by the philosophers upon the Greek word *logos*, or "word," of John 1:1, when, in thinking of God's translation of his thought into human language, he suggests that Jesus was "the Word," the translation of God's thought into a language which men could understand. Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In the person of Jesus Christ God had at last succeeded in translating his thought for men.

God's expression of his thoughts in the Scriptures, however, is not the ultimate translation which it is the purpose of this chapter to emphasize. Nor is this ultimate translation the translation of the Scriptures

into our own tongue so that we can, for ourselves, read God's thoughts in our own language. For language is merely the medium for the translation of thoughts from one mind to another mind. A word is the effort to express a thought. If the translation of that thought is to be completed, the word must suggest to the hearer the same thought which it was chosen to express. If you have in mind the thought of an object which is round, of a color between red and yellow, with thick covering which is both smooth and soft, and within which is a juicy substance delicious to the taste and good for food, and you wish to pass this thought on to the mind of another, you will use the word "orange." Into that word you have compressed your thought; you have translated it into the word "orange." But what will that word mean to the person who hears it? Will "orange" suggest to him exactly what it meant to you when you used the word; will he translate the word "orange" in his own mind into your idea of an orange? The translation of your thought is not complete when you have packed your thought into the word "orange," but when the word has been unpacked, or translated, into the same thought in the mind of your friend.

God wishes to speak to us, to transfer his thoughts to our minds, so that we shall think his thoughts after him. So he has spoken to men through the Old Testament prophets as his messengers; so he sent his Son to live and to teach; so he gave his Holy Spirit to guide the New Testament writers in telling us of Jesus. As a result the world has in Hebrew and Aramaic and Greek the thought of God, so far as his thought could be expressed in the words of men. But the Hebrew

words and the Greek words, whether written or spoken, mean nothing at all to most of us. These are dead languages. So in the providence of God the Scriptures have been translated into our own tongue in order that English words, corresponding to the Hebrew and Greek words, might speak to us and our minds might translate the thought bound up in these words into the corresponding thought in our own minds. For the translation of God's Word is not complete until the words God used to express his thought in human language have brought into our minds the thought God intended to put into those words.

How imperative it is, therefore, that we read and study God's Word with diligence, with intelligence, with prayer, and with a conscious dependence upon the Spirit of God who is to guide us into all truth, lest our own preconceptions and our own limitations either rob the words of God of some of their meaning or read into them our own meaning instead of God's meaning! Have the Scriptures brought to our minds God's own thought? Until they have done this, the original Scriptures have not been fully translated so far as we are concerned.

This is one reason why we need Bible students who will use their knowledge of language and of God's revelation in his Word in order that we may be helped to get from the Scriptures the thought which God put into the words. Often it has been said, "The Bible means what it says." But that statement is not altogether true. God's Word means what God intended it to say and it is our business, so far as in us lies, to find out just what God intended to say to us through his Word. So the Bible must be read in the light of the



rules and principles of language. This is why the Bible in the English of our day is better, at least for the purpose of study, than a Bible in archaic English, beautiful as that archaic English may be, if the language does not mean to the reader what it meant when it was written.

Even when we have perceived God's thought, we have not attained the ultimate translation of the Scriptures. God's purpose has not been accomplished even when the words of the Scriptures, in a language we understand, have translated God's thought into our own thought so that we think God's thoughts after him. A thought must be translated into the feeling which that thought should arouse. It is not enough that the name "God" should convey to our minds all that the Bible has written into it. The word "God" which brings to the mind all that the Bible has written into it must translate itself into those feelings which we should have toward that God—the feelings of humility, of reverence, or holy fear, and of love.

Not even yet have we reached the ultimate translation of God's Word. The purpose God had in the revelation of his thought in human language will not be accomplished until the transfer of his thought to our minds has not only stirred our emotions aright, but has also led to that conduct and life which expresses his thought in action. The Bible is not merely a book to think by; it is a book to live by; and until the Bible is translated into conduct in everyday life, it has failed of its ultimate purpose. In Titus 1:1, Paul said of himself, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the knowledge of truth which is according to godliness."

In his letter to Timothy, also, he speaks of "the doctrine which is according to godliness." The truth is in order to right living.

When Jesus had talked to the multitudes, with his own disciples as his special congregation, he marvelously put God's thoughts into human language. He revealed the mind of God. There was something about his words and his manner which impressed all who heard. They "were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Read carefully again the now familiar words of Jesus with which he closed his translation of the thought of God into the language of men and in which he made plain what is meant here by the ultimate translation of God's Word: "Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof."

This is the ultimate translation of the thought of God: He that "heareth these words of mine, and doeth them." It is the translation of God's thought, made plain through language, into life.

II  
THE CHRISTIAN'S FAITH

“And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.”  
John 17:3.

## CHAPTER I

### THE GREAT FUNDAMENTAL FACT

As we look about us in the world we discover that there are many kinds of knowledge. We discover also that all knowledge is not of equal value. And since no one person can know everything, it becomes necessary to choose from all available knowledge those things which it is of greatest importance for us to know.

When a young man is planning his education he must choose the branches of study to which he will devote himself with a view to fitting himself for his career. He cannot study all the branches which the high school or academy offers; much less can he take all the courses which the college or university affords. The student therefore must ask himself, "What do I most need to know?"

In the great school of experience it behooves every one of us to ask himself, "What do I most need to know in order that I may most truly live?"

If achieving manhood consists in building a strong, vigorous, and healthy body, then the answer will be, "What you most need to know is the science of health with its branches of physiology, hygiene, dietetics, sanitation, body-building, and so forth."

But what if life consists in more than bodily strength and physical comfort? Suppose we discover that the man with the gun can defeat the man with the club; that the man with tools can accomplish more than the man with bare fingers or a stick of wood or a sharp

stone; that the man with the steam engine can outwork the man with bare muscle. Then to achieve manhood we must pursue that branch of knowledge which we may call the practical sciences.

Suppose again that real manhood is not achieved when one has outstripped his fellows in materialistic accomplishment, but that man finds his higher self in relationship to others, in home life, in business coöperation, in the various relationships of society. Then we shall wish to study the science of social relationships and political economy in order that we may learn the art of living with others.

Now suppose that we discover that intellect, the power to think and reason, is what marks man as different from the beasts. Then in order to achieve manhood and really live, we must include in our studies and give prime place to that cultural knowledge which will develop the intellect and enlarge personality, and fit us for fellowship with other minds. Then we will study psychology, philosophy, and literature.

But suppose when we have studied all the branches the importance of which we have thus far come to realize, we should discover that it takes more than physical powers and practical arts, social relationships and intellectual achievement, to make real manhood. Suppose we discover that underlying all these there must be established what we call character. Suppose we discover that brute strength uncontrolled by right motives becomes inhuman cruelty; that skill unguided by sympathy becomes mere selfish acquisition to the hurt of others; that a knowledge of social relationships divorced from a good conscience ministers only to tyranny; and that intellectual superiority untempered

by the spirit of service leads to the enslavement of lesser intellects. Then we must come to the conclusion that if life in the truest sense is really to be achieved, we must give first place to the search for knowledge of what is right in every relationship in life and to the building of character which will render right choices practically certain, and make sure the carrying out of right decisions when they have once been made. Of what value is physical strength when murder is in the heart? or skill if utter selfishness controls? or mastery of social relationships if these become the mere tools of base desire? or intellect if it is nothing more than the instrument of selfishness? Man's greater need is to know what is right, to desire what is right, and to build a character which will assure the doing of the right.

Now suppose that the soul of man is being molded in this life for a life beyond, and that in building character—that possession which gives man his "manhood"—he is building something which shall endure throughout eternity; does not the truth about the soul and its eternal relationships become the most important branch of knowledge which man can acquire?

And suppose that in the search for character we discover that, after all, religion is the great character builder, that men become like what or whom they worship. Does not their search for the true God in order to discover and achieve true manhood become the supreme goal in the search for truth? If Augustine was right when he said, "Thou hast made us for thyself and our heart is restless until it rest in thee," is it not true that the supreme need of man, for the achievement of the highest manhood, is to find and know God?

If we should turn the pages of all history and seek the highest example of manhood the world has known, that example of manhood will be found to be the Man Christ Jesus. Living centuries before the great modern achievements of which we boast, he was and still is the truest man. And what is the secret of his manhood? The answer is, his character. And what is the secret of his character? The answer is, his relation to God. And what is his message to men who seek the fullest and truest life? This is his word: "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

Fundamental to all life's relationships is our relationship to God, and the most fundamental knowledge is the knowledge of God. Do we not see this to be true as soon as we begin to think about it? Assuming that God is the Creator and Preserver of the world in which we live, see what follows:

If God planned the human body, can it be possible for us to achieve the fullest health and the utmost vigor if we ignore the Maker of the body in our attempts to discover the science of health? If God planned the material world in which we live, how can we hope truly to subdue the earth if we ignore Him who made nature? Can we expect to learn the laws of nature if we ignore and deny Him who made these laws which are his will impressed upon the material world? Do we learn the intricacies of a marvelous machine by scornfully pushing the inventor out of the way? And is there not evidence enough in the history of the world to show that where men deny God, true science cannot prosper? Have not true science and knowledge of God gone together? "Because that, knowing God, they glorified



him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Rom. 1 : 21, 22.

If God made the human heart, can men possibly lay the foundations of a true society if they deny Him who wrote the laws of social relationships in man's nature? And, if character depends upon a true sense of right, can character be achieved when men do not seek to know Him whose voice speaks in the conscience and to whose righteous laws the conscience points when it insists, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not"?

If in God "we live, and move, and have our being," can we truly live except as we come to know him? If we are really to live in God's universe, we must seek to know God. No wonder the Bible begins with the striking words, "In the beginning God." Without God there would be no world, no human body, no soul, no social nature, no conscience. God is the fundamental fact of the universe. He who seeks to know God will find all truth waiting in his path; but he who shuts his mind against God dulls his powers of perception, warps his judgment, and beclouds his intellect.

To seek God is the beginning of wisdom.

## CHAPTER II

### IGNORING GOD

In spite of the fact that to know God is the secret of life in its truest and highest sense, men go on ignoring him; for it is possible, within limits, to ignore God.

When Moses came out of the wilderness where he had learned to know Jehovah, the God of his fathers and the God of his enslaved people, he stood before Pharaoh, the haughty sovereign of Egypt, with the message of God: "Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." But the proud sovereign of the Egyptian Empire scornfully curled his lip, and scoffed: "Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go."

This haughty and self-sufficient ruler did not know God and, furthermore, did not care to know him. He thought that with the brush of his hand he could sweep this God of the Hebrews out of his kingdom, just as men to-day sweep God out of the material world and give him no place in their science; sweep him out of their intellectual world and give him no place in their philosophy; sweep him out of their moral world and give his commandments no authority over their conscience. They live without God. They are modern Pharaohs, setting up a kingdom in which they give God no place.

But Pharaoh discovered, to his dismay, that he had

not gotten rid of God. He did not know Jehovah; but it was Jehovah who had given him life. He did not know Jehovah; but this God of the Hebrews was he who had sent the rains that fed the sources of the Nile, who had given life to the seed that ripened into Egypt's rich harvests, who had sent the sunshine to nourish field and vineyard and orchard.

Pharaoh came to realize that he could no more get rid of God than a man to-day can get rid of the law of gravitation. A man may ignore the statement that two bodies attract each other in direct proportion to the product of their masses and inversely as the square of their distance apart, but he will go right on buying food weighed according to this formula and paying for it with coins whose intrinsic worth is determined by this formula.

The man who wishes to erect a building may ignore the laws of stress and strain and of strength, if he wishes, but when his building collapses beneath his feet and falls in over his head he will realize that ignoring the law of gravity is perilous.

Pharaoh made just such a discovery. His disdain of Jehovah whom he did not care to know turned the sacred Nile into a stinking river, and out of that great source of fertility came the croaking frogs to cover the land. Out of the dust of the earth came the pests of lice and flies. His flocks and herds sickened and died. Pestilence visited his people. Jehovah who was ignored opened the sky and poured out hail and let loose armies of devouring locusts. This God whom Pharaoh did not care to know put his fingers before the sun and darkness covered the land of Egypt, but between his fingers he let the light shine upon the land where his

people Israel dwelt. This proud and self-sufficient king heard the sound of mourning in his land, and discovered that the God whom he ignored was the God of life. He fell upon his knees before Moses, with the cry, "I have sinned against Jehovah your God . . . entreat Jehovah your God. . . . Rise up, get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve Jehovah, as ye have said." Pharaoh could ignore and scoff at God; but he had to pay the penalty of his willful ignorance.

Men to-day can ignore God and can for a time go on living in their self-sufficiency. Men can dig the treasures God stored up in the earth and can deny, or ignore, Him who put them there. They can harness the forces of nature to do their work and can rebel against Him who impressed upon these forces the very laws that make them capable of becoming man's servants. They can create and carry on their great business enterprises while they ignore Him who gives them the power to get wealth. They can establish godless homes and organize a godless society, with their own laws instead of the Ten Commandments, ignoring God who planted love in the human heart and who made men to dwell together. They can manufacture their own religions, to suit their own tastes rather than their natures, and ignore Him in whom they live and move and have their being, and who alone can satisfy their souls. They can do all this, just as Pharaoh swept God out of Egypt with the gesture of his sovereign hand; but the penalty must be paid. There is bound to come in the experience of the individual, the community, the nation, or the world, that does not seek to know God and His will, just such an experience as that which in our

day laid waste the fertile fields, flooded the rich mines, ate up the world's wealth, deluged the earth with blood, and brought the sorrow of death.

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” The fool is the man who does not know how to make the most of life. If the world could only see the folly of trying to live without God, or of trying to live in ignorance of God, the educational institutions of the nations would be reconstructed with the aim of seeking to impart first of all a knowledge of the character and the will of the true God, whom to know is life.

The simple words of the Intermediate Catechism are true : “We most need to know what God would have us believe and do.”

## CHAPTER III

### HOW WE MAY LEARN TO KNOW GOD

If, then, man's greatest need is to know God, we must seek the answer to the question: How may we learn to know God? It may help us to answer this question if we ask ourselves another question: How do we learn to know people? How do people reveal to us what they are?

The first answer is that we learn to know people by what they do. We know the inventor by his invention, the workman by his product, the thinker by his philosophy, the novelist by his book, the musician by his music. We may learn to know God first, then, by his works, by what he has done. In the works of God we should include not only the material world in which we live, but also man himself with his God-given powers. Human history reveals the character of Him who rules and overrules in the affairs of men.

There are some who hesitate to accept the statement that we may learn to know God through nature. They seem to think that this statement detracts from the Scriptures as the revelation of God to men. But the Scriptures themselves teach us that we may learn to know God through nature if we have the seeing eye and the listening ear. In Psalm 19 we read :

“The heavens declare the glory of God;  
And the firmament showeth his handiwork.  
Day unto day uttereth speech,  
And night unto night showeth knowledge.”

The world of nature is one of God's books in which he has written his character, and nature is one of the voices by which he tells men of himself. And so the poet Addison, in his hymn which is really an exposition of the early verses from Psalm 19, after speaking of the spacious firmament, the unwearied sun, the spangled heavens with their stars and planets, declared:

What though in solemn silence all  
Move round this dark terrestrial ball?  
What though nor real voice nor sound  
Amidst their radiant orbs be found?  
In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
And utter forth a glorious voice;  
For ever singing, as they shine,  
"The hand that made us is divine."

Nor is the idea that we may learn to know God through nature the mere poetic fancy of psalmist and hymn writer. Paul, in the close reasoning of his Epistle to the Romans, urges the same thought, that God may be known through his works: "For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity."

What, then, does nature teach us about the character of God? As we examine the world in which we live we must conclude that the Creator of the world is almighty. Think for a moment of the forces that are stored up in this world. Years ago, before modern methods succeeded in bringing from coal even more of its stored up energy, a writer declared that experiments with a locomotive showed that there was sufficient power in half an ounce of coal to move two tons a mile. Weigh a half ounce of coal and see what space it occupies.

But when that coal is ignited and its energy is turned into heat, and that heat is turned into steam by the process of boiling water, and that steam is harnessed in a locomotive and made to work, the coal—in spite of great loss in this transmutation of energy—can draw two tons a mile over the rails. Now think of all the coal stored up in the mines of the earth. How great must have been the power which originated that energy! And then remember that coal represents only an infinitely small fraction of the forces in the world—electricity, wind, and wave, and all the rest. Think of the energy stored up in even a grain of radium. What, then, must have been the might of Him who called all this into being by the word of his power! Surely from nature we learn that God is the Almighty. No wonder that men who in their ignorance feel after God humble themselves before the lightning's flash or the consuming fire or the rushing winds!

Some mathematician busied himself with calculations and came to the conclusion that if all the strength of all mankind that had ever lived upon this globe could be combined into one gigantic arm, that arm could not move the earth one foot in a thousand years. Think then of the power of Him who swung the earth into space at its tremendous speed, hurls it onward turning on its axis at the rate of more than a thousand miles an hour and racing about the sun at the rate of sixty-six thousand miles an hour. Then think that this earth is but a speck in the universe that astronomers know! Are we not assured that this world must have come from the hand of One who is almighty?

Nor can we with open mind examine nature without coming to the conclusion that this world must have



had an intelligent Creator. The Creator must be all-wise. A famous medical authority, writing in a light vein for popular readers, has said: "If we knew half as much chemistry as the liver has known, the secrets of the universe would lie before us like an open book. Even to-day it is the most wonderful and resourceful chemical laboratory in the world. We think we have done wonders in discovering a poison that will kill or neutralize the toxins of a single germ—such as mercury, or the diphtheria antitoxin. But one little six-sided saw-tooth lozenge of a liver cell, no larger than the head of a pin, not only can neutralize and destroy any one of forty different toxins and poisons that are brought to it by the blood but can split them up so ingeniously as actually to turn one part of them into sugar fuel, another into starch or fat, and another into harmless bile waste." Whence learned the liver cell more chemistry than the greatest modern chemist? How did the human body build a laboratory superior to the finest laboratory the modern world knows? Can there be any other possible answer than this: The human body was planned and formed by an infinite Intelligence.

Think of the eye with its lenses, more marvelous than the most perfect telescope or microscope or camera—for these are copied after the eye. Who made the eye for the light and the light for the eye? Who made the stomach, with its chemistry of digestion? Who made the cattle upon the thousand hills, the grains of the field, the fruits of the orchard, and the vegetables of the garden for the gastric juices to work upon? Who planned the lungs for the air and the air for the lungs? Who wrapped up the oak in the acorn, and prepared the

soil and the rain and the sun to furnish just the elements needed to unfold that living germ into the mighty oak? Are we not blind when we cannot see in nature the wisdom of the Creator?

Man prides himself upon his wisdom in discovering the law of gravitation, the wave lengths of light, the secrets of sound. Whence came these laws with their uniformity? Must they not have been impressed upon the substance of the world by One who sees the end from the beginning? by an infinite Intelligence?

Does not God also in his works reveal himself as a God of righteousness? How else could man, the creature, possess a sense of right and wrong? Whence this voice within that says, "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not"?

Has not the course of history shown plainly that underlying society are moral laws which are working out their certain ends? The nation that breaks these laws of right perishes from the earth. There are laws of righteousness written in our natures just as plainly as the laws of light or sound or gravitation are written in the material world, if we only had the wisdom to discern them. If the laws of the material world reveal the wisdom of God, surely the laws which operate in society must reveal the righteousness of God. He is a moral Being.

If all this is so clear, why, then, is there so much ignorance of God? Are men blind? Paul answers: "Because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the

likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Jesus shows the way out of this ignorance of God when he tells us that only the surrendered heart can lead the mind into the way of truth. If any man wills to do God's will, he shall know.

Because in our blindness we do not learn to know God through his works, he has revealed himself to us in his Word. In the Bible God has taught clearly the lessons of history and has made his character known. And because of the difficulty of translating his thoughts and his character into human language, even through inspired spokesmen, plainly enough for us to understand, God at last revealed himself by means of the Word made flesh, who dwelt among us, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

How then shall we learn to know God? Through nature, through history, through experience; more clearly through the Scriptures; but supremely through the life and character and teaching of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHARACTER OF GOD

The Scriptures contain many characterizations of God. Some of these reveal his majesty as Creator and as Sovereign of all the earth, while others emphasize his righteousness, his holiness, or some other attribute. Some of these characterizations are in the lofty language of the prophet; others are in the profound words of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. But is there anywhere in the Scriptures a more illuminating characterization of the true God than that which Jesus himself gave to a woman of Samaria?

As Jesus and the woman talked by the well, she asked the Teacher to settle for her the much debated question concerning the worship of God which was a bone of contention between the Jews and the Samaritans: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus replied that how men should worship God should be determined by the character of God whom they worship. What God is, will answer the question of how he must be served. Then Jesus gave this woman the wonderful definition or characterization of God found in John 4: 21-24.

God is a Spirit. When the theologians of the Westminster Assembly were seeking words in which to characterize God in the "Confession of Faith," they went back to this conversation of Jesus with the woman by the well and wrote that God "is a most

pure spirit." When they framed a briefer characterization of God in the Larger Catechism, they quoted, "God is a Spirit." Then in the famous Shorter Catechism, once more they used the words of Jesus: "God is a Spirit."

Probably most of us, when we first heard the words "God is a Spirit," felt that this definition made God unreal. With the word "spirit" we associate qualities and powers less real than those of the material world in which we live. Accustomed as we are to material things which we can see and feel and handle, we think a God who is pure spirit cannot be a God of power. We feel that there is something unreal about a spirit God. The forces we know are the forces of the material world. The granite hills are our idea of reality. But the fact that God is a Spirit does not make him any less real or any less powerful.

It may help us to realize this if we think of the greatest forces we know. What is dynamite? What gives to dynamite and other great explosives their power? Is it the hard, tangible substance of which they are composed? Is it not, after all, just the capacity of these substances to convert themselves into gases? Their power lies in the rapid generation of expanding gases. But if material substance is what makes reality, surely there would be more force in the substance composing explosives than in the gas which it generates when the substance is ignited. Evidently, then, power is not in proportion to solidity. The expanding gas of the exploded dynamite can actually rend the granite of the eternal hills.

Electricity is not a substance. You cannot measure its bulk or weigh its mass. It can be measured only in

terms of force. Electricity is so ethereal that it passes instantly over a thin copper wire, but it can turn night into day, can change the cold of winter into the heat of summer, and can run the great machines of the factory or send the cars speeding over the rails.

That force which we call gravity is so invisible and so intangible that for centuries the world never suspected its presence. It was unseen, untouched, unfelt. All that men knew was what they called weight, and yet this mighty force by its unseen bands was holding the universe together and keeping the sun and the moon and the distant stars in their places and maintaining the equilibrium of the universe.

Many scientists to-day who have tried to discover what matter really is, and so have endeavored to analyze and dissect it and learn its ultimate nature, say that after all matter is just force. So true is this that some philosophers tell us that the world is, after all, a spiritual system. When we think of the reality of force, God does not become less real but more real, if we know that God is a Spirit. And does it not seem strange that centuries before scientists reached their modern scientific conclusions concerning the nature of the material world, Jesus should have said, "God is a Spirit"?

When we think of ourselves, which is the more real, that immaterial being which dwells within the body and which we call the real self, or the body in which this personality dwells? A man may lose his leg, but he has lost nothing of his true self. His personality is just as large as before, and often his physical loss becomes a spiritual acquisition. He may be blinded by some accident to the eye of flesh, but his spirit can still picture the scenes which are stored in the memory

and can paint new pictures for itself upon the canvas of the mind. The musician may lose his hearing through some defect in his physical ear, but he still hears the beautiful melodies and sweet harmonies that echo within the walls of his inner self. The materials that compose the body, we are told, are completely changed once in seven years; and yet you are the same person you were seven, or fourteen, or twenty-one years ago. The spirit has persisted in spite of the decay of the flesh. The most real thing you know is yourself, which is spirit, the immaterial tenant of your material body.

Because God is a spirit he is not less real, but more real than the material world in which we live. So the psalmist, seeing the decay of earth's tents and houses, might well say of God:

“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place  
In all generations.  
Before the mountains were brought forth,  
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,  
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Let us now come back again to Jesus' words to the woman by the well. Jesus said something besides the great fact that God is a Spirit. The woman had wanted to debate which of the two locations was the proper place in which to worship God. Jesus replied, “The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father.” And why? Because true worship depends upon the character of him who is worshiped, and God, who is a Spirit, is not bound to any location. Unhampered by the limitations of the material world, he can be and is everywhere. He is omnipresent, filling the universe. There is no voice beyond his hearing, no place beyond his reach.

“Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?  
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there;  
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.  
If I take the wings of the morning,  
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;  
Even there shall thy hand lead me,  
And thy right hand shall hold me.”

When the Temple in Jerusalem was dedicated to the worship of God, Solomon said in his prayer,

“But will God in very deed dwell on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded!”

Jesus went further in characterizing God. This universal force or spirit which we call God is conscious, that is, he is personal. Jesus called him “Father,” and said of him that “he seeks.” These words remind us of the father in the parable who waited for his son to return, and of the shepherd in the parable who sought his sheep. This almighty and ever-present Spirit knows all that is taking place. To Moses at the burning bush, he said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows.”

Because God is a Spirit, because he is present everywhere, and because he is conscious and knows, “they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

In his conversation with the woman by the well, speaking as a Jew Jesus said to her as a Samaritan, “Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews.” Thus Jesus confirmed the conception of God which



the Jews had acquired by experience and revelation. The Jews had learned the holiness of God. They knew of Isaiah's vision in the Temple when he "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the Temple," and he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts."

The Tabernacle and the Temple had taught the Jews the holiness of God. The mercy seat, where God's presence was manifested, was in the Holy of Holies which the high priests alone could enter, and only once a year. Washings and cleansings prescribed in connection with the services of the Temple pressed home upon the minds of the Jews the fact that God is holy and demands cleanness of heart; he cannot tolerate the presence of sin.

The Jews had learned also the righteousness of God. Their fathers had felt that God's reputation among the nations depended upon the safety and prosperity of Jerusalem. The fall of their capital would disgrace God before the world, they argued in their hearts, and so they would not listen to the prophets who warned them of the doom that was coming upon Jerusalem as the consequence of their disobedience. But the fall of Jerusalem came, and this calamity and the Exile taught them that God is a God whose commandments no one can break without suffering the penalty. Prophets, in his name, summoned his faithless people into court. With heaven and earth as witnesses, their guilt was proved and the penalty of disobedience was

enforced. They learned that God would vindicate his righteousness.

The Old Testament, too, had taught the Jews the love of God. His love for Israel was as the love of a husband for a wife, or of a father for his child. And so in talking with the woman at the well Jesus called God the "Father."

But it is only through Christ himself that the love of God is fully revealed. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." It was the apostle who knew Jesus, who said, "God is love"; and it was Paul who knew the grace of God as it is in Jesus Christ, who wrote, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

All this is summarized in the answer of the Shorter Catechism to the question, "What is God?" "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."

Our conception of God is a practical matter, for our conception of God affects our ideals and our conduct. If we think that God is local, and lives only in our town, we will keep his commandments when we are at home but will set them aside when we are away from home, where, we think, God does not dwell. If we think that God is ignorant we will try to deceive him. If we think that he is vain we will try to flatter him. If we think that he is not righteous, we will try to evade his laws and strangle conscience. If we think

that he is weak we will attempt to thwart his purpose. If we think that he is changeable we will have no standard of conduct, and will waver in our obedience. If we believe that he is not conscious, we will give no thought to his will. But if God is to us a Spirit, conscious, holy, wise, powerful, loving, and unchanging, we shall worship and serve him everywhere and always, from the heart, with sincerity, and with holy fear and love.

## CHAPTER V

### JESUS CHRIST

We cannot pursue far the study of the character of God without meeting the necessity of studying also the character of Jesus Christ, for the God of the Christian is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If we read the first verse of the first book of the Old Testament we find the words, "In the beginning God," but in the first verse of the Fourth Gospel we read "In the beginning was the Word." The Old Testament prophets said "Thus saith Jehovah," but when Jesus speaks he says, "I say unto you;" and those who heard him noted that he spoke "as one having authority."

The Old Testament had its threefold benediction:

"Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee:

Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

The New Testament also has its threefold benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

The Old Testament exalts the name of Jehovah: "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." In the New Testament we

read also of a name, but it is the name of Jesus: "For neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved," and, "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

It behooves us therefore to inquire, "Who is this Jesus who is thus in the Scriptures of the New Testament so closely identified with Jehovah of the Old Testament, and what did he do?"

As we read what the New Testament has to say concerning Jesus, we discover that Jesus did not begin his personal existence in this world. In a sense in which it can be said of no other, he came to earth. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us."

Jesus himself said to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." But his critics retorted, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Solemn and of profound import was Jesus' reply: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am." How could Jesus, who thus spoke to the Jews, have existed before Abraham? Abraham lived nearly two thousand years before the birth of the infant Jesus, and yet Jesus said, "Before Abraham was born, I am!" The significance of these words is indicated by Paul when he wrote to the Philippians: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied him-

self, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." And so John wrote in his Gospel, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." Jesus himself said, "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also . . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Jesus existed as a personality in the beginning, and this eternal, preëxistent Son of God became man. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." Of Mary the mother of Jesus, we read: "And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son." So truly human was this child of Mary that members of his own family did not suspect that he was anything more than man. Only after the resurrection did they believe that he was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus possessed a true human body. He was weary, so he sat down by the well; he was thirsty, so he asked for a drink. He knew the pangs of hunger and the anguish of pain. Thousands who saw him looked upon him as a man; it was only spiritual vision which enabled men to see that he was the Son of God. Thus the eternal Son of God was "found in fashion as a man."

Jesus, then, was one person, with two natures. The same person who called God "Father," called man "brother." The same person who said, "I thirst," also said to the waves and the winds, "Peace, be still." The same person who said, "Give me to drink," said also, "Before Abraham was born, I am." Sometimes he spoke and acted as the Son of God, and sometimes as the Son of Man. This is a mystery, but only by thinking of him as both the Son of God and the Son of

Man can we explain the statements of Scripture concerning him. As a person sometimes uses one hand and sometimes the other, so Jesus Christ sometimes acted through his divine nature and sometimes through his human nature; but always it was the same personality who acted.

Jesus was the one perfect character of history. He was free from sin and possessed all the virtues of true manhood. When his opponents would not receive him but sought to destroy him, he told them that they would not believe him because he spoke the truth. Then he gave them their chance to prove him in error. "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" he challenged. Are not these words a twofold proof of the sinlessness and the perfection of Jesus? If he had been guilty of any outward act of sin, his enemies would have been only too glad to have convicted him. And Jesus himself showed no consciousness of any sin, in spite of the fact that he had the keenest moral sense the world has known. How quick he was to detect sin! And the sin which he spoke most about was the sin of the heart. His moral sense pierced to the very soul and searched out the secret motive. But in his own heart he discovered no sin. In all his teaching he never revealed the least consciousness of failure to do the will of his Father. Those who saw the Word who had been made flesh "beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father."

Jesus' perfect life and character was an essential part of his ministry, for he must be "without blemish and without spot." His teaching also was an important part of his ministry. They called him "Rabbi," or teacher. When the multitudes gathered about him "he opened his mouth and taught them," and "he

taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." Jesus is the world's greatest moral and religious teacher. In nineteen hundred years no one has approached him as the revealer of God and duty. And so when Luke wrote his introduction to The Acts, in referring to his Gospel he said that he had written what Jesus "began both to do and to teach." Jesus' teaching was essential to his ministry.

He was also a miracle worker. His miracles were not wrought for their own sake; they were signs. They were arguments for his claims and illustrations of his saving power. They were parables in action corresponding to his other parables in words. He healed disease, he cast out devils, he controlled the winds, he multiplied the loaves and fishes, he brought the dead back to life. And these signs were recorded that we "may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

Jesus himself, however, laid greatest stress upon his death as an essential part of his ministry. The Four Gospels themselves indicate the importance of his death by the number of pages they give to the account of his suffering and death. Comparatively early in his ministry Jesus began to teach his disciples "that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed." He said to the Jews, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself. But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die." The cross, as the symbol of Jesus' death, is the heart of the gospel. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "For I determined not



to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

But the death of Christ, without his resurrection, would have made the cross a failure. The cross alone is not the center of the gospel, but the cross of the risen Christ. To the disciples therefore "he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." So certain historically was the fact of the resurrection of Jesus that Paul was ready to base his whole faith upon this foundation fact: "If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain."

Think of what Paul's certainty of the fact of the resurrection of Jesus means! Remember that he had been the chief persecutor of the Church, that he had given his life to the destruction of the Christian faith. He listened to the arguments between Jews and Christians, and as an enemy of the Christian faith he was in a position to seek out every argument against the claims of the Christians. He was associated with those who had put Jesus to death. He could gather all their testimony against the resurrection of Jesus. He could interview witnesses on the ground. With the authorities on his side he could have secured permission even to open the tomb and search for the body of Jesus. But, in spite of the fact that he knew all the arguments against the claim that Jesus had risen from the dead, he was so sure that Jesus had actually risen again that he was ready to stake the Christian faith on this one fact. In triumph he declared, without the least fear of reasonable contradiction, "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead."

This Jesus who died and rose again, after forty days ascended into heaven. So Stephen, "being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." The Jesus who ascended is still the same person, for he "is the same yesterday, and to-day, yea and for ever."

Jesus is not a dead Saviour, or even an absent Saviour. In a true sense this living Saviour is a present Saviour. Before he left the world he said to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," he told John to write to the church of Laodicea: "if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." And so Paul's prayer for the Christians of Ephesus was "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."

Jesus, then, is the eternal Son of God, who became a true man, lived a perfect life, taught what men need to know about God and truth and right and duty, wrought his mighty works as signs, died upon the cross of Calvary, rose again on the third day, ascended to the right hand of God, but is also truly present with all those who believe in him.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE HOLY SPIRIT

Just as we cannot pursue the study of the character of God without being brought face to face with Jesus Christ, so we find that we cannot pursue the study of Christ and Christianity without facing the fact of the Holy Spirit.

When Paul came to Ephesus and found there certain disciples, he asked them, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" He was amazed to discover that these supposed disciples did not know anything about the Holy Spirit, but had been baptized with the baptism of John unto repentance. They were then baptized in the name of Jesus, and when Paul laid his hands upon them the Holy Spirit came upon them.

It is not surprising that Paul should have asked these disciples about the Holy Spirit, for both New Testament teaching and New Testament experience give a prominent place to the Holy Spirit. Jesus charged his disciples not to "depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence." On the Day of Pentecost this promise was fulfilled and "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." If Paul questioned the disciples in Ephesus concerning the Holy Spirit because Jesus himself had emphasized the importance of the Holy Spirit and because the experience of the Church taught the impor-

tance of the Holy Spirit, every Christian should know something of what the Scriptures have to say about the Holy Spirit.

The Scriptures, in the first place, make plain the fact that the Holy Spirit is a person. The Holy Spirit is not to be called "it" as if the Holy Spirit were an impersonal force or an influence. Jesus said, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth." The fact that in Greek the word "spirit" is a neuter noun while the pronoun used here is masculine, makes clear the emphasis which Jesus lays upon the personality of the Holy Spirit.

And the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus speaks of as "he," is just as truly God as the Son is God, so in Christian faith we have the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We have, parallel to the threefold Old Testament benediction, the threefold New Testament benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ [the Son], and the love of God [the Father], and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

The fact that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person is shown by such a statement as Paul made in his letter to the Corinthians: "For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God." The Holy Spirit, therefore, is as truly God as a man's own spirit is himself.

What we have been considering brings us face to face with one of the great mysteries of God's revelation of himself to men. We know that God is an infinite Spirit, all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving, and ever-present.

We have found, too, that God is in Christ, so that Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." And Christians know that God has worked in their hearts, and this work, as we shall see, is referred to especially as the work of the Holy Spirit. So we have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These are the facts of God's revelation of himself in the Scriptures and in human experience. Christians therefore speak of the Holy Trinity, or the Triune God, or the Three-in-One. But when it comes to trying to think or speak clearly of the Trinity, serious difficulty arises. What word shall we find to express the distinction between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit? For we must still hold fast to the great Old Testament truth which Jesus himself taught when he said, "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one." For centuries the word "person" has been used to express this distinction in the One God between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, because there seemed to be no better word to use for this purpose.

The three Persons of the Trinity are not, however, three persons in the sense in which three people are three persons, for the three persons of the Trinity are one God; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one in substance. Yet the Son spoke of the Father and of the Holy Spirit; the Father out of heaven said "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It is clear, then, that we should think of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of God the Holy Spirit, but that we should think of them as constituting truly one God. When the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit acts, it is God acting.

As we read the Scriptures we find that the Holy

Spirit is referred to in many connections. He was active in Creation, for "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." To the Holy Spirit man owes his intelligence and skill. Concerning Bezalel, who was to take a leading part in making the tabernacle and its equipment, God said, "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise skilful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship." The great inventor owes his genius to the endowment which the Spirit of God has given him.

To the work of the Holy Spirit we owe also our moral nature. Conscience is the work of the Spirit of God. At the time of the Flood, God said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever." When the Spirit of God ceases to strive with man, his moral sense is lost, and he becomes the creature Paul describes in his Epistle to the Romans: "Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness." Is not this why the psalmist, conscious of his sin which had been committed in spite of the persuasion of the Holy Spirit in his heart, cried out in penitent fear,

"Cast me not away from thy presence;  
And take not thy holy Spirit from me."

The Holy Spirit is preëminently our Teacher. Jesus called him the "Spirit of truth," and said, "But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

Not only is the Holy Spirit the Teacher who illumi-

nates the mind so that we may understand spiritual truth; he also opens the heart to receive the truth. When Paul preached by the river in Philippi, Lydia of Thyatira heard the apostle and her "heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul." This was the work of the Holy Spirit. The human heart is not ready for the truth until the Spirit of God has done his work in the heart, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged."

Faith also is the work of the Holy Spirit. His work is to "convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." The new birth is also his work, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. . . . Ye must be born anew. The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

It is the Holy Spirit who transforms our characters. "And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." This change which is wrought in those who believe is "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Spirit is also the source of power for service. Jesus charged the disciples "not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father." Then they would "be baptized in the Holy Spirit." He said, "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses."

When the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, they "began to speak . . . as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Now we can see why our attitude toward the Holy Spirit is of supreme importance. If we owe to him our intelligence and our conscience, if he must teach us the truth we need to know and open our hearts to receive this truth, if he gives us the new birth and transforms our characters and gives us power for service, what hope of salvation have we if we rebel against the Holy Spirit and deliberately thrust him out of our hearts? No wonder Jesus said, "Whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." In sinning against the Holy Spirit we resist him whose work it is to convince us of our sin, enlighten our minds in the knowledge of Christ, renew our wills, and "persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel."



## CHAPTER VII

### SIN

We cannot give Christian truth serious consideration without facing the great fact of sin. The message of Christianity is distinctively the message of the gospel. The word "gospel" means good news, and this good news is the good news of salvation from sin. Christianity, therefore, must face the fact of sin. Even the name of Jesus reminds of the fact of sin, for the angel said to Joseph concerning Mary, "And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins."

We cannot read the Word of God without being impressed by the great fact of sin. It intrudes itself into the garden at the very beginning of the Bible's story and drives man from Paradise. Old Testament Tabernacle and Temple rites and ceremonies emphasized the fact of sin and the need of cleansing. The burden of the messages of the prophets was sin. In the psalms we hear the cry of hearts conscious of sin. In Old Testament history we see the record of sin and its consequences. Nehemiah understood the meaning of Israel's history when he prayed in exile, "I confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee." The fact of sin, emphasized in human experience, we must face.

When we examine the words of the Bible which are translated "sin," we find that there are a number of

these words and that they have different shades of meaning. Some of them carry the idea of failure or missing the mark, indicating that sin is the failure to measure up to God's standard for us. Other words have the meaning of bending, twisting, or crookedness, indicating that sin is turning or breaking away from the straight path God has made for us to walk in. Other words have the meaning of rebellion, indicating that sin is rebellion against God, a wrong attitude in the heart. So the Westminster Shorter Catechism defines sin as "any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God."

We can have shadows only because there is light. If God were not righteous, there could be no fact of sin, any more than there could be crime in a country that had no laws, or shame among a people who had no standards of conduct. So sin is sin because God is God. Because there is a moral Ruler of the universe, there is the fact of sin in the world.

Acts may be sinful because God is holy and God sees. Words may be sinful because God is holy and God hears. Thoughts may be sinful because God is holy and God is a Spirit who knows our minds. What we leave undone may be sin because God is perfect.

Failure to do our full duty is just as truly sin as doing what is wrong. Omission is as truly sin as commission. In the parable of the Judgment Jesus represents the King as saying, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me." He that is without sin, therefore, must be perfect in thought, in speech, and in conduct; not merely free from every fault, but possessing every virtue. No mere man meets these requirements. John therefore wrote,

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

There are three great facts about sin which we must consider. The first fact is that sin stains the soul with guilt. One of the most wonderful studies in sin in all the Scriptures is the story of Adam and Eve in the garden. After they had sinned they hid themselves from the presence of Jehovah. Why? Let Adam answer: “I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid . . . and I hid myself.” But why did he hide? Because his sin had left something in his heart, the consciousness of guilt that brought shame and fear. When Cain had slain his brother Abel and tried to hide his crime and evade his responsibility, God said, “The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.” When Joseph’s brothers came down to Egypt to buy corn and found themselves in difficulty, they said one to another, “We are verily guilty concerning our brother.” The guilt of their sin was still upon them, and they knew it. Saul who kept the best of the flocks for himself instead of devoting them to God as he had been commanded, tried to hide his disobedience; but the prophet replied, “What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” Saul’s guilt could not be hidden. When David brought about the death of Uriah in order that he might take Bathsheba his wife, he could not hide his guilt, for the prophet Nathan, pointing the finger of accusation, declared, “Thou art the man”; and David cried, “I have sinned against Jehovah.”

Secular literature also proclaims the fact that the guilt of sin clings to the sinner. Shakspeare’s “Macbeth”

is a study in guilt and conscience. Macbeth and his wife had slain Banquo. Their crime was hidden, but they could not rid themselves of the sense of guilt. The dramatist makes Macbeth cry out: "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red." And Lady Macbeth, walking in her troubled sleep, exclaims, "What, will these hands ne'er be clean? Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." Sin brings upon the soul a stain of guilt that no human effort can remove.

Sin, however, brings more than guilt upon the soul; sin becomes a force in the life. It is like a disease germ, injected into the blood, that multiplies until it holds the body in its terrible grip. James wrote in his Epistle: "But each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death."

Sin permitted to enter the heart strengthens its hold upon the character until its chains of habit cannot be broken. The rich young ruler, so eager to know the way of life and walk in it, "went away sorrowful; for he was one that had great possessions." His desire for riches, indulged, so gripped his soul that he could not shake it off even though he desired life eternal.

Paul speaks of sin as a force in one's life. "I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am!"

The more any sin is indulged, the stronger its power becomes. When we let sin into the heart, it feeds upon its own indulgence and grows into an overpowering evil force.

Sin, which leaves its stain of guilt and becomes an increasing evil force in the life, is seen in all its awfulness when we realize its consequences. This third fact, the consequences of sin, is emphasized in the Scriptures. When Adam sinned in the garden and felt the guilt of sin, he heard the words of condemnation which told him of the consequences of sin: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." To guilty Cain, God said, "When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth." To the guilty brothers of Joseph, Reuben said, "Spake I not unto you saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore also, behold, his blood is required." To guilty Saul, to whose sin the bleating sheep and the lowing cattle bore witness, the prophet said, "Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king." To David, to whom the prophet said, "Thou art the man!" he said also, in God's name, "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised

me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife."

Sin is a force that brings ruin, "for the wages of sin is death." Sin itself is its own punishment. This fact is suggested in the Epistle of James when he is telling the rich of the consequences of their sinful selfishness: "Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you and shall eat your flesh as fire." Sin is its own witness against the sinner, and its own punishment.

The man who has become the victim of alcohol needs no other punishment than his own indulgence. All that is necessary is to deprive him of that for which he has created an appetite by his indulgence, and he is in torment. The man who has yielded continuously to the enticement of a drug suffers the penalty of his weakness when he is deprived of the drug for which by his indulgence he has developed an appetite. The more one indulges, the greater becomes the desire and the less the power of the thing indulged in to satisfy. This is the story of sin. Every indulgence in sin increases the desire of the sinner and decreases the satisfaction which the sin brings. Thus sin creates its own torment when the sinner is deprived of the possibility of indulging in it. He becomes like the man described in Virgil, who is consumed by thirst as he sits chin deep in the river, and as he endeavors to lower his lips to the water it recedes, leaving him ever thirsting and yet unable to drink. Everything which God forbids possesses this character. For a time it may

please and give pleasure, but at the bottom of the cup of indulgence will be found the bitter dregs of sin's own making.

Jesus is known as the most tender-hearted man who ever spoke the truth to men. He is called "the gentle Jesus." But this most tender-hearted and gentle Teacher, who was moved with compassion by the suffering of men, taught in the strongest terms the awful consequences of sin. So terrible is sin, Jesus taught, that nothing can possibly be worth while which will lead us into sin. "And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire. And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell. And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Sin brings guilt that man cannot eradicate. Sin is a force in the life that man cannot overcome. Sin brings death from which man can provide no way of escape, and "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?"

## CHAPTER VIII

### SALVATION

Christianity has an adequate answer to the sinner's cry, "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" The gospel of Christ is the message of salvation from sin. Of this message Paul declared that he could never be ashamed, "for it is the power of God unto salvation."

The salvation from sin which the gospel offers, however, is not a salvation that comes through some prescription, or routine, or ceremony; the salvation which the gospel offers is through a Person. The word to Joseph concerning Mary his espoused wife was, "And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." Paul's own answer to his despairing cry as a sinner, "Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" was, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The apostles declared to the council, "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."

Jesus himself emphasized the fact that salvation is to be found in personal relation to him, for he said: "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." "He that hath the Son hath the life," wrote the Apostle John. Paul declared that



“the gospel of God” is “concerning his Son,” and of this gospel he was not ashamed “because it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” Salvation is to be found through a Saviour, and that Saviour is Jesus Christ.

If Jesus is the Remedy for sin, he must provide cleansing from sin’s guilt, deliverance from sin’s power, and escape from sin’s eternal consequences. This three-fold salvation from sin is just what Jesus does provide as the Saviour of the world.

Jesus removes the guilt of sin. The Old Testament sacrifices impressed upon the Hebrews the fact of the guilt of the sinner. It was necessary to be cleansed from the stain of sin. The sprinkling with water and the sprinkling with blood alike proclaimed the need of cleansing if man is to have approach to a holy God. The Jews associated the shed blood with the removal of guilt. In view of the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion, the meaning of John is plain when he pointed his disciples to Jesus, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!” Jesus was God’s sacrifice to remove the guilt of sin.

The ancient prophet, centuries before Christ came, wrote: “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” When the centuries had passed and Jesus would impress upon his disciples one last great lesson, as they sat about

the table where the passover had been celebrated with the slain lamb, "he took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins."

Afterwards one who had sat beside Jesus that night, wrote: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin. . . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Thus our guilt is removed by Christ, and "being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." And Peter wrote, "Christ also suffered for you, . . . who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." The debt of sin has been paid and the guilt removed.

But the remedy for sin must do more than remove sin's guilt. It must also overcome sin's power, for sin is a force. In our day there is widespread use of antitoxins. The antitoxin, introduced into the blood, destroys the disease germ in the blood and conquers the disease. Jesus is the antitoxin for sin, and the infusion of his life into us begins the process which will result in the eradication of sin. The gospel is a "power." It brings to us a great force to work in us, and that force

is Christ. So Paul wrote, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." "The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Sin is a disease of the soul of which Jesus is the cure.

Christ imparts a new nature to the believer so that "if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

The infusion of new life by Christ to counteract the power of sin does not mean instant sinlessness, however. In the oft-quoted words, "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God," "doeth no sin" means "does not keep sinning," and "he cannot sin" means "he cannot keep sinning." The antitoxin is working. There may be single acts of sin, but persistence in sin is a thing of the past. As the Catechism puts it, "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness." Christ provides in himself a remedy for sin because his life in us becomes a power greater than the power of sin. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Sin not only brings guilt upon the sinner and infuses a destroying spiritual poison into the soul; it brings its terrible penalty. "The wages of sin is death." To be

the all-sufficient Saviour, Jesus must be able to deliver us from sin's penalty. This he does. "The wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."

How then shall we avail ourselves of this threefold salvation from the threefold curse of sin? The Scriptures declare that we are to be saved "by faith." "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."

But what is meant in the Scriptures by this faith that saves? In his Gospel, John suggests the answer to this question by making "believe" and "receive" synonymous. "But as many as received him, . . . even to them that believe on his name." Perhaps this verse was in the minds of the framers of the Shorter Catechism when they answered the question, "What is faith in Jesus Christ?" by the statement, "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel."

John G. Paton, the famous missionary to the New Hebrides, told of his efforts to translate the Bible into the language of the natives among whom he labored. When he came to the all-important word "faith," he did not know how to translate it, so he called in one of the natives to help him find the desired word. The missionary leaned against a chair and asked the native,

“What am I doing?” The native gave him the word for “lean.” But this word did not answer the purpose. Then Dr. Paton sat upon the chair and again asked the native what he was doing. The native gave him the word meaning “to sit,” but still the translator was not satisfied. He leaned back in the chair, put his feet upon the rungs and threw his whole weight upon the chair. Then he asked the native what he was doing. The answer was the word he would use to translate the English word “faith.” Faith is the act of resting fully upon Christ alone for salvation.

Of course knowledge is necessary for faith. We cannot believe in Christ as our Saviour from sin unless we have learned of him. “How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” Jesus commanded his disciples to go into all the world and teach all nations. Faith in Christ is possible only through the knowledge of Christ which the gospel brings. The first step in faith is knowledge of the truth.

Faith in Christ, however, is more than knowing and understanding what is taught about Christ. Faith in Christ is also a persuasion that what is taught and understood about him is really true. We may imagine ourselves sitting in a theater, witnessing a performance. An actor comes upon the stage and cries, “Fire!” We understand the meaning of that word. But it will make a great difference whether we think that what the man says is a part of the drama we are witnessing or is the announcement of a fact to the audience. If we take it as a part of the drama, we will sit still and see the performance through. But if we are persuaded that the man is announcing a fact and that the house

is actually on fire, we will rise from our seats and rush to safety. So it is possible to know all that the Bible says is true about Jesus, and still not have faith. We have faith when what we have learned is accepted as truth and becomes a reality to us.

Real faith, therefore, will lead to action. Saving faith is an act. If we wish to go from this country to Europe we know that we must cross the ocean on a vessel. Suppose we should go to New York and down to the pier. We look up at the great ship. "Surely," we say to ourselves, "that great ship can take us across the Atlantic in safety." But to convince ourselves, we make inquiry. We learn that the ship has been built by a famous shipbuilding concern and inspected by the Government and declared trustworthy. We learn that its engines were put in by the best marine engine manufacturer in the land. We interview the captain and crew, and learn that they are intelligent and experienced. We examine the records and learn that this ship has already made dozens of trips across the Atlantic, through clear weather and fog, through calm and storm, and has come through without a single mishap. We are persuaded that this ship will take us across the ocean. But if we stand upon the pier and let the ship pull out, we shall never reach Europe. We must step aboard. This stepping aboard is faith. It is not the persuasion that the ship can take us across; it is the act of taking the ship. And faith in Christ is taking him as Saviour. Faith is the act of stepping aboard Christ and depending upon him to take us safely into the harbor of salvation. Or, to change the figure, it is opening our hearts and lives to let Christ in.

The act of taking Christ as our Saviour from sin may,

in a sense, be a simple act, but it is also a vital act. It is a simple act to press the electric button, but something happens: the room is illuminated. It is a simple act to open the throttle of the engine, but something happens: the great train moves. It is a simple matter for the branch to be connected with the vine, but something results: the grapes develop and ripen. It is a simple act to take Christ as Saviour, but something happens: the transformation of character begins.

Goodness is the result of saving faith, and salvation is not the result of goodness. We are not good in order to be saved, but good because we are saved. If we really believe that the eternal Son of God "emptied himself," and took "the form of a servant," and was "obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross," in order that he might save us from our sins, and we realize that we owe to him our pardon, our peace with God, and our hope of glory, is it possible that we can actually take him as our Saviour without loving him? And if we love him we must keep his commandments. Living faith cannot be without works. Those who are saved will serve. "If ye love me," says Jesus, "ye will keep my commandments."





III

THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE PRINCIPLES

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,  
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,  
Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers:  
But his delight is in the law of Jehovah;  
And on his law doth he meditate day and night.  
And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water,  
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,  
Whose leaf also doth not wither;  
And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

Ps. 1 : 1-3.

## CHAPTER I

### THE LAWS OF LIFE

Achievement is made possible by the discovery of law. The marvels of the modern chemical laboratory surpass the dreams of ancient magicians and the wonders of fairy tales. Out of garbage the chemist can produce the colors of the rainbow and the fragrance of the flowers. The chemical products from coal tar are legion. All this, however, has been made possible by the discovery of the laws of chemistry. If these laws of chemical reaction had not been discovered and organized, the wonders of the modern laboratory would be impossible.

Think of the achievements of transportation. A modern steamship can take us from New York to Liverpool in five days. A passenger can board a train in New York on Monday and step from the car in San Francisco on Friday. These marvels of transportation have been made possible only by the discovery of laws; the combustion of coal, the expansive power of steam, the strength of steel, the effects of curve and grade, have all been studied until formulas have been established as a working basis for transportation engineers. These formulas are the statements of discovered laws.

We stand amazed as we look up at the towering buildings of our great cities, which have been made possible by the discovery of laws of the material world as to weight, stress, strength, resistance. An engineer's handbook will give the formulas upon which the

architect bases his specifications for one of these great structures. Until these laws were discovered, it would have been perilous to attempt the construction of one of these modern towers.

If, then, we are to make the most of life, if we are to achieve the highest success in the great enterprise of living, we must discover, or must have discovered for us, the laws of life. The discovery of the laws of life is one of the greatest blessings that can come to the world of men.

To the ancient Hebrews were given ten laws of life which were to guide them in their various relationships. These ten laws of life were introduced by the statement: "And God spake all these words, saying, I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt . . . . Thou shalt not. . . ." These laws were announced as the formulas of God, whose power and wisdom and love they had learned to know and to trust. They were the God-revealed laws of life. And yet the Hebrews—and all nations—have rebelled against these practical formulas for the guidance of man's life in its various relationships.

We rebel against the Ten Commandments as if they were prison bars to shut us in, when they really are doors that lead into a larger and better world. We rebel against them as if they were weights, when they are actually wings upon which we are to mount to the heights of achievement. We chafe under them as if through them God were seeking to rob us of some treasure, when truly they are bundles in which God has wrapped precious possessions intended for our use and enjoyment. We resist the Commandments as if they

were the decrees of a tyrant, when they are a proclamation of true liberty by a generous Sovereign. The Commandments are just God's statement for us of the formulas of life.

If we were chemists, should we rebel if some master chemist should place in our hands his secret formula? If we were mariners, should we decline to accept a wonderful chart of the seas? Should we quarrel with the formula which is based upon the nature of chemicals and their relations, or with the chart that conforms to the facts of latitude and longitude and soundings, lighthouses and buoys? Then why should we rebel against the Ten Commandments, if they are indeed the true formulas of life, based upon the true nature of the world in which we live, the true nature of man himself, and the true character of God?

If the Ten Commandments are indeed the discovery of the laws of life, what should be our attitude toward them? Let us examine these laws of life and see if they, on their very face, do not bear marks of being the practical formulas of life.

## CHAPTER II

### THE LAW OF SERVING GOD ONLY

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Ex. 20 : 3.

The first law of life deals with man's relation to God. The Ten Commandments put first things first. Man's relation to God is made the first law of life because this is the most fundamental relation. Jesus emphasized this fact. He taught, “Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Only the acceptance of the First Commandment can give us sound personal character and a sound society, which are essential to the real enjoyment of material good. All other relationships must be made secondary to our relationship to God.

We have had various theories of the universe. For centuries it was believed that the earth was the center of our world and that the sun and moon revolved about the earth. But as time went on and knowledge increased, it was discovered that many observed facts could not be accounted for on this theory. It rather pricked the pride of this planet to discover that the sun, and not the earth, is the real center about which the other bodies in our system revolve. But only when we make the sun the center of our world do we find it to be an ordered whole. So only when we make God the center to which all men relate their lives can we have an ordered society. The whole system of human relationships is bound to go awry when we put God out of his place. Because God was interested in the fullest

development of the Israelites as a nation he gave them the Commandment which was to make him the center of their life: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

In a day when many gods were worshiped, this Commandment taught Israel that there is but one God. Do we appreciate the fact that Israel's law taught the truth of one God when polytheism, or the worship of many gods, was practically universal? There were many gods in Babylon, in Egypt, in Canaan. Beholding the brightness and the heat of the sun, and recognizing that it had much to do with the earth, nations made the sun their god. The moon was queen of the night, and had her share in influencing the earth, so the moon also might well be worshiped. The changing seasons brought the fruits of field and orchard, and so men worshiped the god of harvests. The forces of nature became deities which were recognized as demanding worship. In the midst of this worship of many gods, the Commandment of Jehovah went forth: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This does not mean in preference to Jehovah, but in his presence, or in his sight. All other gods were to be completely banished. Jehovah plainly declared that there is no room in his universe for any other god.

It is easy for us to-day to reject the polytheism of the ancients, for we know that the universe is one. Sun and moon and stars, winds and thunder and lightning, land and sea, are not contending forces or rival beings, but parts of one great whole. The whole universe is the product of one mind and obeys a single will. The earth and sun and moon and distant stars are as truly one as are the parts of a watch, with its wheels within

wheels turning this way and that, with the one purpose of moving the hands about the face in perfect time. There is but one God, who made and rules earth and sun and distant stars. So it is easy for us to cast out the gods of the ancient Phœnicians and Greeks and Romans. We give no place to Baal or Zeus or Jupiter. But it is not easy for us to give the one God his supreme place.

The first law of life, however, makes plain not only the fact that there is but one God, but that this one God must have first place in our lives. The recognition of the fact that giving God first place is the first law of life opens to man the door to the highest development. This law is as essential to success in the business of living as is the recognition of the law of gravity to the business of building, the law of supply and demand to business and commerce, or the law of justice to government. It is not easy to give God first place, but this is the first law of life.

Men have assigned happiness first place in their lives and have given themselves to pleasure. But it has been found by experience that happiness cannot be attained as a life goal, but is a by-product of the service of God. Men have given material prosperity first place. They thought that the amassing of great possessions would bring the highest satisfaction. But they have discovered that material prosperity is perilous. Society needs something more than it needs wealth. Material prosperity has often brought ruin in its wake. Materialism robs the world of those ideals which make life really worth living. The great essential for the world's peace and true prosperity is character. And where do we find character? Is it not true that to say of



anyone, "He is a God-fearing man," is the same as saying, "He is a man of character"?

Think of the men who have done most for humanity. Think of the influence of Abraham in the world and of the blessing which his life left among men. He was "the friend of God." Moses has one of the greatest monuments in all the world, the Hebrew nation whose life he molded. Moses "endured, as seeing him who is invisible." David did more for the nation of Israel than Solomon in all his glory, or any other of Israel's kings. David continually "inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I?" Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and reëstablished the Jews in their own land. To him, in large measure, the world owes its Old Testament heritage. Nehemiah constantly "prayed to the God of heaven." The greatest character of history is Jesus Christ. When it cost him his all, he prayed, "Not my will, but thine, be done." He who has done more than all other men to enrich human life, by precept and example proclaimed the soundness of this first law of life which God gave to ancient Israel.

It was not pride or self-seeking that led God to give to Israel the Commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." God was bringing a nation of slaves out of Egypt. He was planning to make of them a great nation. As the first essential in the process by which they would reach that great goal, he gave them the first law of life, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

This is still the first law of life. In this Commandment God opens the door to life's richest blessings. For one who seeks to make a success of the business of living to neglect this law, is as foolish as for a man

to expect to succeed as a manufacturing chemist and ignore the first law of chemistry. God in the first place in our lives is the first law of living. The apostles knew what they were about when they said, "We must obey God rather than men."

## CHAPTER III

### THE LAW OF SERVING GOD SPIRITUALLY

“Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.” Ex. 20: 4-6.

The first law of life—that God must be made the center about which the life of the individual and of society is to be organized—is followed by a second law closely related to it. This second law is that our relation to God is primarily spiritual. God is to be served and worshiped spiritually. This law which is announced in the Second Commandment was emphasized by Jesus when he said to the woman by the well in Samaria, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

In the first place, this second law of life forbids the worship of idols. Such a commandment was needed in the days of ancient Israel when idol worship was the common practice of the surrounding nations. Where modern education goes there is little need of forbidding the worship of many gods and many idols. In heathen countries, even where the Christian religion is not actually adopted, educated people can no longer hold to their old religion with its many gods and its idols of wood and stone and iron and brass.

But although modern education may banish polytheism and idolatry, and render this Commandment almost unnecessary so far as actual idol worship is concerned, this second law of life, in its fuller interpretation, is still needed. It is needed even in Christian America, in Christian homes, and in the Christian Church. It is a law of life which is fundamental and, like all the other Commandments, is neither rendered unnecessary by education nor outgrown by civilization.

The deeper teaching of the Second Commandment is that God must be worshiped spiritually. Any worship or service other than spiritual worship and service is bound to pervert man's nature and impair his life. The law of spiritual service and worship can no more be neglected than the law that the one true God must be enthroned in the life.

Yet by many who bear the name Christian this Commandment is not accepted as expressing a law of life, for they practice image worship. They defend the practice by the argument that it is difficult, especially for the ignorant, to think of God without the aid of some material object before them which enables them to concentrate their thought upon him whom they would worship. An image or a picture, they urge, is an aid in the worship of God. No doubt Aaron advanced this same argument when he made the golden calf. The people were complaining because Moses had disappeared. He had been God's visible representative, and now God's leadership seemed to have been lost. The people wanted a God whom they could see, so Aaron made the golden calf to give them a visible representation of Jehovah. But the wrath of God was kindled against Aaron and against Israel because they had done this

thing. The Commandments of God were broken as surely as the stone tables upon which they were written were shattered when Moses cast them upon the ground in his indignation. Never could the people of Israel become the nation which God had planned to make them if they used images in worship instead of worshiping God as a Spirit.

The use of images in worship really defeats its own purpose, for the images soon become substitutes for God himself. This is a simple fact of experience. God is lost in the image. And in losing a true conception of God, character also is lost. So Paul wrote to the Romans: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness." Infraction of the law of spiritual worship by the use of material representations of God, or the use of images in the worship of God, leads ultimately to ignorance of God. Images are not stepping-stones to a true knowledge of God, but barriers that stand in the way of attaining a true conception of God who is a Spirit.

When Mary Magdalene met her risen Lord, she sought to lay hold upon him, but Jesus gently rebuked her. Her fellowship with Christ henceforth was to be a higher and a truer fellowship than she had ever known before: it was to be a spiritual fellowship. For the purpose of enabling them to testify to the reality of his resurrection body, Jesus asked his disciples to touch his risen body and to behold him eat. But the resulting conviction was not the highest kind of faith, nor the

faith upon which Jesus pronounced his blessing. Jesus said to Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Moses who gave the people of Israel their wonderful conception of the character of God "endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

There is no more subtle foe to true religion than the fallacy of seeking physical contact with God. Jesus established the Lord's Supper in order ever to keep in the minds of his disciples down through the ages the great fact of his death as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. This sacrament is a symbol of Christ's saving work and of our spiritual relation to him. But some, like Mary who would clasp the feet of Jesus in the flesh, have turned the bread and cup—which represent the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus—into his actual flesh and blood. Thus they feel that they can actually touch Christ. They think that thus they bring Christ nearer, just as those who advocate the use of images think that they can in this way bring God nearer. But this practice results rather in substituting the bread of the sacrament for the spiritual Christ. The very means of communion may become a barrier to real spiritual fellowship. So long as the brazen serpent of the wilderness was a memorial or symbol of what God had done for Israel in healing the bites of the fiery serpents in the wilderness, it was a blessing; but as soon as it became an object of worship for some supposed virtue in itself, it became a curse to be banished. The Lord's Supper is a memorial to remind us of what Christ has done, and of our spiritual relation to him. When the "Host"—the wafer, or bread—becomes an object of adoration, as the embodi-

ment of Christ, it becomes an idol. There is a great difference between the cross as a symbol of what Christ has done for us, and the crucifix as a representation of Christ himself before which we bow.

Protestant Christians are not free from the temptation to set aside this fundamental law of life that God is to be worshiped and served spiritually, for it is easy to substitute forms and ceremonies for real heart service. To Israel the prophet Joel said, "Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God." Outward forms in the worship of God who is a Spirit are empty unless they are the sincere expression of the heart. The Second Commandment forbids closed eyes in prayer as a pretense of shutting out the world, while the mind goes on picturing unholy scenes. The law of spiritual service forbids the bowed head as a sign of humility before God while the heart is lifted up with pride. To bend the knee, while the will is still stubborn before God, is not worship. Songs of praise which fall from the lips without rising from the heart cannot please God. Prayers which are the utterance of words and not the desires and aspirations of the heart, are not prayer at all. All such practices break the second law of life which is that God must be worshiped spiritually.

God must be given first place in our lives, and our relation to him must be a relation of one spirit to another Spirit. Our service must be the service of the heart. This spiritual service, however, expresses itself through man's whole being—mind, heart, soul, and strength—and in every thought, feeling, purpose, word, and act.

One of the blessings of the Christian religion is that it brings the spirit of man in touch with the Spirit of God. No image is to come between us and God.

Neither is any human person to stand in the way of our direct approach to him. When Jesus Christ said, "It is finished," the veil in the Temple was rent from the top to the bottom. Henceforth God was to be worshiped directly and through no mediator, save the Second Person in the Godhead himself. We are to come directly to God, who is a Spirit, in spiritual worship and service. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a great priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith."



## CHAPTER IV

### THE LAW OF REVERENCE FOR HOLY THINGS

“Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” Ex. 20 : 7.

To the ordinary hearer the Third Commandment seems merely to forbid the use of God’s name in that kind of profanity which is commonly called “cursing.” Others, going deeper, add to this meaning the injunction not to swear falsely or perjure oneself in God’s name. Thus the Commandment teaches the binding character of oaths or pledges taken in the name of God. But the Commandment goes deeper still. It commands reverence for anything which, because of its relation to God, is holy or sacred.

A name represents the thing itself. A person’s name identifies him and, to those who know him, represents his character. A man’s signature on a check or document stands for the man himself and his authority. By God’s name is meant anything which stands for God, represents God, or suggests God. As the Shorter Catechism says, it is “anything whereby God maketh himself known.” Relation to God makes anything holy, and therefore to be revered. Jesus, in speaking of oaths, said, “Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.” Heaven and earth and the holy city are to be revered because of their rela-

tion to God. The human body is to be revered because it is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The third law of life, then, commands reverence for all holy things. Anything which in any wise reveals or makes God known must not be taken lightly. This involves, first of all, reverence for the name of God.

A word is just a sound which has acquired meaning by association. Where there is written language, that sound is represented by written characters. Any word acquires meaning by having that meaning impressed upon it by use. A bottle of a certain shape suggests milk, because we are accustomed to the use of that peculiar shape of bottle for carrying milk. A bottle of another shape suggests medicine, because such a bottle is commonly used to hold medicine.

So words are names which have acquired meaning by being used to convey certain ideas. "Man" is just a sound, but the word brings to the hearer a definite concept, as it is called. If the word is to bring to any mind the full meaning of "man," it must be kept pure by being associated only with those traits and qualities which belong to true manhood. As soon as the word "man" is associated with the idea of cruelty or immorality it becomes debased, and can no longer convey the higher conception of manhood. Just so it is with the name of God. Always speak the word "God" to a child reverently, in tones or associations that suggest love and kindness and justice and wisdom, and "God" will come to mean to the child the One who possesses such a character. But let that name be associated with anger and passion and vulgarity, and what will it mean to a child?

When a mountain boy was asked if he knew Jesus,

he replied, "I don't know who he is, but I hear dad talking about him when he's mad." What idea could that boy have of the character of Jesus if he heard his name uttered only in the curses that fell from the lips of a man in a fit of passion?

Because our conception of the character of God is affected so directly by the use which we make of his name, a true conception of the character of God, who is holy, can be formed and retained only if we use God's name reverently. A man cannot associate God's name with evil passions and at the same time associate it with a feeling of love and reverence. It is impossible. The reverent use of God's name, therefore, is absolutely necessary if we are to serve and worship God spiritually and are to give him his supreme place in our lives. The first two Commandments cannot be kept if we break the Third Commandment.

A pledge made before God as a witness must be kept with absolute fidelity. We cannot break such an oath and give God his true place in our lives. To break that oath is to deny either God's knowledge or God's righteousness. By the very act of disregarding an oath we turn our backs on God. The perjurer blinds his spiritual eyes. His perjury clogs the channels through which God reveals himself to men.

The Word of God is to be revered because it is God's Word. An irreverent attitude toward the Bible closes up the chief channel through which a knowledge of God and his will comes to men. Make a joke of a verse of Scripture, and it begins to lose its true meaning. Speak lightly of God's revelation in his Word and its message loses its power. Reverence the Word of God and the channel is opened for the truth to flow into the

mind, that we may know Him whom to know is life eternal.

God's house is to be revered. Of course a church building is not God's dwelling place, for he "dwelleth not in temples made with hands." The heaven of heavens cannot contain him; much less any earthly temple made by the hands of men. But a stated house of worship is set apart as a meeting place with God. The Tabernacle was the tent of meeting with God. The Temple was the place of God's presence. In the church building, dedicated to the worship of God, many have found the very presence of Jehovah. And because the place dedicated to the worship of God is thus associated with God in thought and experience, this place must be treated with true reverence. Irreverence in God's house must necessarily react upon the irreverent by dulling his sense of the holiness of God.

Because the body is the temple of God, profaning it by physical sin drives God out of the soul that dwells in the body. Therefore vice undermines character and destroys the soul with frightful rapidity.

Irreverence for that which, by its association with God, has become sacred or holy is a sin to which the Third Commandment has attached a penalty because, that penalty is inherent in the sin itself. In the story of "The Man Without a Country," Philip Nolan cursed the United States. His judge declared that the just penalty of his deed was that he should never again hear the United States mentioned. Irreverence for the name of God and for anything whereby he makes himself known, renders one an outcast from God. This is simply the result of the sin itself. "Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

Consequences follow disobedience as certainly as in the case of any natural law.

The third law of life, the law of reverence for holy things, is written deep in man's own nature. God did not make this law at Sinai; he revealed this law already written in the very nature of God and man. It is as essential to us in the business of living as the laws of chemical reaction are to the manufacturing chemist or as the laws of health are to the physician.

## CHAPTER V

### THE LAW OF TAKING TIME FOR THE SOUL

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” Ex. 20:8-11.

The Fourth Commandment probably causes more debate than any other Commandment of the Ten. As soon as the subject of Sabbath observance comes up for discussion, much begins to be said about “blue laws” and unreasonable legislation. The advocates of an open Sunday insist that Sunday observance is urged by a party of pessimists whose sole purpose is to take the joy out of life. They do not realize that the law of the Sabbath is not man-made legislation, but a law of life written in nature.

Like any other law, the law of the Sabbath may be disregarded if the breaker of the law is willing to pay the price. A bridge architect may decide that it is too costly to use cables of the size which sound specifications would call for, and may substitute materials of smaller dimensions; but some day the law of stress and strain will exact its toll, and the bridge will crash into the river. The novice in the laboratory may disregard one of the fundamental laws of chemistry, but he must pay the penalty when his mixture explodes. The farmer

may disregard the law of harvests, and try to reap without sowing or attempt to sow at harvest time and reap at sowing time; but he must pay the penalty of his folly in failure. So it is with the law of the Sabbath. We may disregard it if we choose, but we must at last pay the price. The law that we must take time for the culture of the soul is one of the fundamental laws of life. We cannot make a success of the business of living without obeying this law.

The Fourth Commandment is written in man's nature. God did not make this law on Sinai as an afterthought. It was not given to restrict and hamper, or even to discipline Israel. God revealed it to Israel as one of the laws of life which is based upon the nature of man, just as the law of gravity is based upon the nature of the material world.

Writers have called attention to the fact that the number seven seems to be written in nature. The lunar month is four times seven days, or four weeks. Seven seems to be a basic number in the development of fevers. It is a common saying that the material which constitutes the body changes every seven years. Certain physiological processes operate on the basis of multiples of seven days. So there seems to be some deep-seated reason, found in man's own nature, for the seven-day week marked by the Sabbath.

There is written in nature also the law of rest. The farmer has learned that he will get the best results if he lets his fields rest. He has worked out a principle of rotation of crops, with a period of rest so as not to exhaust the resources of the soil. Even machinery lasts longer if it is allowed to rest, for rest retards the process of crystallization of the metal. Man, as a worker, is

more efficient if he does not work every day but is given regular periods of rest. The Sabbath of rest from labor makes for health and efficiency. So our Lord himself said, "The sabbath was made for man."

But this is not the most important element in the law of the Sabbath and its observance. The Fourth Commandment insists upon intensive labor on six days so that labor shall not be necessary on the seventh day, because man needs something else on that seventh day. There is something more important at stake than a healthy body or an efficient workman. God does not exalt the physical. When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness to turn the stones into bread because his physical nature demanded sustenance, he replied, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Again, he said to his disciples, "And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." The Sabbath's rest is important for the health of the body, but it becomes more important still when we consider the business of living, for the Sabbath's rest vitally concerns the welfare of the soul.

The law of taking time for the culture of the soul is essential to the three laws of life which we have already considered. God will not long continue to have supreme place in our lives and in society, nor will he long be worshiped spiritually and directly, nor will holy things long continue to be revered, when men cease to observe God's day.

Pharaoh was not altogether a fool, even though he was guilty of great folly. He was afraid to let the people of Israel go into the wilderness to worship because he knew that, freed from the grind of work, they would



have time to think of higher things. He hoped to keep them in bondage by incessant toil. The Devil's philosophy is Pharaoh's; if he can only keep our days full of the tasks and activities that tie us down to the present world, he knows that we shall have little room for the interests of the higher life. Those who have done most to help the world are the men who have found time to think. The Devil wants to keep us so occupied that we shall have no leisure for meditation upon higher things. If there is to be any soul culture in the individual and in society, there must be time dedicated to this purpose. Ideals and aspirations will perish when the interests of this world crowd over from the six days into the seventh. Even if it could be proved that men would enjoy better health if they gave Sunday to sport and recreation; could we afford to purchase health and enjoyment at so great a price?

What is man? When has man really succeeded in attaining the goal of manhood? If man is at his best a mere physical being, he has achieved success when he has developed a magnificent body, healthy, comfortable, and efficient, and succeeds in maintaining this high standard of physical well-being. But the man who is physically perfect is little better than the beasts. It is man's intellect that lifts him above the animals.

Has man, however, attained his highest goal when he has developed his mind until he has become a marvelous thinking machine, when he has mastered the arts and sciences and conquered the forces of nature by the power of mind? Man as a thinking machine, unguided by conscience, is worse than the beast. The marvelous achievements of war are not the achievements of which true manhood boasts. The true man has a conscience.

But is even the conscientious man the highest type of manhood? Paul, when he breathed forth threatening and slaughter and dragged men to prison and voted that they be put to death, was conscientious. Even man with a conscience is not the highest type of man unless that conscience is guided by sound moral laws. The man with a conscience must know right, and a knowledge of right is the result of moral education.

Evidently the truest manhood cannot be attained without moral culture, and moral culture, like all other culture, requires time. If, then, we give up the day set apart for the nurture of the conscience, for the development of man's moral and spiritual nature, we are turning abruptly aside from the path that leads to the true goal of human life. The hope of humanity is in God, and unless there is time for fellowship with God and the culture of man's spiritual nature through this fellowship, manhood will fall to the level of the beasts.

The argument that man needs Sunday for physical recreation becomes absurd when it is placed over against the great fact that humanity needs a conscience and a moral and spiritual nature to make this world a decent place for man to live in. And it becomes worse than absurd when we remember that the soul of man will outlive his body, and that it is vastly more important to study the needs of man's spiritual nature than it is to study the needs of the body. "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?"

In the Fourth Commandment, God is not taking from us one of our precious days; he is trying to make the other six days really worth keeping. The law of taking time for the soul is a true law of life.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE LAW OF RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY

“Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.” Ex. 20 : 12.

Educators recognize the principle that little progress can be made in the development of the human race if each generation must begin where the preceding generation began. The race has made progress by each generation's adding its own achievement to the achievement of the generation which went before.

If each generation had to build its houses without learning from the experience of the older generation, our modern buildings could never have been erected. We should still be living in caves or rude huts made from the branches of trees. If we had to discover for ourselves the processes of carding wool and spinning and weaving, we should still be wearing skins instead of woven garments, for the modern manufacture of cloth is the result of each generation's improving upon the work of the generation which went before. The modern locomotive has not been developed by the present makers, but has been made possible by accumulated improvement upon the first engine.

If we had to discover the sciences and develop the arts from first principles for ourselves, without profiting by the discoveries and achievements of those who have gone before us, our modern wonders would be impossible. But by the process of education each gen-

eration profits by the experience of the generations which preceded. Give up the processes of education by means of which the experience of the race is passed on to the next generation, and soon man will be back in the stage of barbarism and savagery.

The hope of the race, then, is education. This includes, of course, religious education as well as every other kind of education, for man's highest development is intellectual, moral, and spiritual, not material. But there can be no education without recognition of authority. We cannot profit by the experience of others unless we respect the authority of the person who seeks to pass on to us that experience or its results. If the child does not respect the authority of the teacher who says that two and two make four, and three times two make six, the multiplication table will never be learned and the child will have to limit his counting to his fingers; he will never get far in the science of numbers. If the pupil will not take the teacher's authority for the statement that c-a-t spells "cat," the pupil will never learn to read.

Of course, in all education, one must learn to think for himself and learn reasons for what he accepts as true, but necessary to the educational process is respect for the teacher as an authority. "Teacher said," usually means "it must be true." Respect for authority makes the education of the race possible. Respect for authority, therefore, is fundamental to the process of education, whereby the experience of the race is passed on from generation to generation. This is true of chemistry, medicine, manufacture, business, music, art, religion, and every other enterprise of man. And it is especially true of religion, which, as we have learned,

is the first essential for true living, for our relation to God is the fundamental relation of life.

No well-organized society can exist without the recognition of authority. Even a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" must have authority. It has its legislative bodies to make laws to bind its citizens. It has executives to carry out and enforce those laws. It has authorities to punish the breaking of those laws. As soon as there ceases to be an authority, even in a democracy, government ceases to exist and anarchy reigns.

There can be no business without authority. Even a coöperative, profit-sharing business must have its managers and its policies. In any coöperative enterprise there must be system and order, which means that there must be rules which are recognized as authoritative.

Human society rests upon sound morality and morality depends upon conscience guided by sound moral laws. There must be some moral authority to say, "This is right," or "this is wrong." Cast aside the moral law, and the foundation of society is undermined.

Absolutely fundamental, therefore, to the welfare of the human race is respect for authority. The Fifth Commandment, which states the fifth law of life, the law of respect for authority, begins where the experience of the child begins. This Commandment emphasizes respect for parents because this is the first relationship into which the child comes. The parent is the child's first teacher, first ruler, and first legislator. The Fifth Commandment, however, implies the duty of respect for all authority: respect for teachers, for employers, for civil authorities, from the police officer on the

corner to the President as the chief executive of the nation. "Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."

There can be no progress, no order, no peace, no prosperity, without the recognition of and obedience to this fifth law of life, the law of respect for authority. It is fundamental to the life of the individual, the home, the community, and the nation. The higher the authority, the greater is the obligation to respect it. This principle the apostles recognized when, facing the highest court of the Jewish nation, they, respecting a still higher authority, refused to render obedience because, as they said, "We must obey God rather than men." Paul therefore wrote, "Obey your parents in the Lord."

Any enduring civilization must rest upon the law of respect for authority. China, with its honor for parents, has outlived many a more progressive nation. Striving for the new has its rewards, but it also has its perils, when it tempts one to disregard the experience of those who have gone before. History witnesses to the soundness of this Commandment which teaches respect for the authority of experience, "that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE LAW OF RESPECT FOR LIFE

“Thou shalt not kill.” Ex. 20 : 13.

We have found that the fundamental laws of life deal with our relation to God. But it should be noted that the Commandments do not stop with the laws of our relation to God. Nor does our relation to God exclude relation to others. A firm foundation is the first requisite for a sound building, just as our right relation to God is the foundation of our true living; but in erecting a sound building there is something to be considered besides the foundation, for we must consider the mutual relation of the parts which together rest upon that foundation. There are the interlocking beams and stones and bricks. So it is in the world of society. There is the first relation to God, but there is also the relation of the individual to his fellow man. The fatherhood of God involves the brotherhood of man.

Our relation to God instantly affects our relation to men. We cannot be rightly related to God without becoming rightly related to men. In the parable of the Judgment, Jesus says : “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye

came unto me. . . . Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me." So James wrote, "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

Clearly then, a right relation to God, which is religion, involves also a right relation to man, which is ethics. The Commandments, which state for us the laws of life, therefore treat of our relation to others. The primary law of life in our relation to others is that given in the Sixth Commandment, namely, the law of respect for life.

This Commandment places the emphasis where it belongs. Life is the most precious possession we have, "for what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?"

In life is involved everything else. The whole plant lies in the germ of the seed. From that seed develops foliage, blossom, flower, and fragrance. When one destroys an acorn he destroys the oak which might have been. So when a man takes the life of his fellow man he robs that man of all his powers and all his possessions, so far as this world is concerned.

Think of the marvelous powers man possesses. His sense of sight enables him to see all the forms and colors of the world about him, the beauties of nature and of art. His sense of hearing enables him to hear the sounds of earth, the voices of friends, the songs of the birds, the harmonies of music. His sense of touch brings to him the sensation of the firmness of the earth to which he can with confidence trust his weight, the



warmth of the sun, the refreshing breath of the cooling breeze, the handclasp of friendship. The sense of taste makes delightful the fruits of the orchard and the products of field and garden. The sense of smell brings to man the fragrance of the flowers. But it is life that makes all these senses possible. Destroy life and you destroy for man the whole physical world in which he lives.

Life makes possible the development of all man's powers, just as the life germ in the acorn makes possible the development of the mighty oak. The infant possesses the capacity for physical development, so that, with proper nourishment and exercise, it may develop a strong and symmetrical body. The infant possesses also a capacity for mental development and by education may develop a great mind. In the living infant lies the germ of a moral nature which through proper moral environment without and spiritual development from within, may grow into that most precious possession which we call character.

Life is the secret of all this development. If life is taken, the body ceases to grow, the mind, so far as this world is concerned, ceases to develop, and character enters eternity arrested. When the Sixth Commandment guards life by declaring, "Thou shalt not kill," it throws its protection about man's great treasure house of all his future possibilities. The framers of the Declaration of Independence therefore declared "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." "Life" is the capacity for development, "liberty" is the opportunity for development, and

“happiness” is the experience which accompanies true development.

The Sixth Commandment forbids more than the sudden or slow crushing out of life; it forbids the hampering of life in its full and true development. To every child and adult belongs the right to the full development of life. To have any share in permitting conditions which hamper the physical development of the child or an environment which robs man or woman of physical well-being, is to break this Commandment. To keep anyone in ignorance or to hamper his mental development is really robbing him of life. And, especially, to do anything or to permit any conditions which warp or dwarf the soul is to break this fundamental law of respect for life. We can attain our God-given rights only when we are given opportunity to develop fully the powers with which God endowed us when he gave us life, and we have no right to do anything or to leave anything undone that will hamper the fullest development of the life of others.

This law does not turn liberty into license. No life can claim opportunity for development if that development will interfere with the development of the life of others. Any man's rights end where his neighbor's rights begin. God does not give two titles to the same property. “Live and let live,” is a modern phrasing of this ancient law of life. We have no right to do anything which will hamper the full development of our own lives or the lives of others. “Thou shalt not kill.”

The Christian does not limit the thought of life's possibilities to this world. Man is immortal and the soul, as the tenant of the body, through the experiences while in the body is being fitted for the eternal world.

The opportunities of this life, therefore, take on new meaning. We dare not reason that because a life has many hardships it is not worth living. The infant's cries are its first exercise. When the infant is teething, does one reason that it is not worth while for the infant to live and suffer? The teething process itself is preparing the child for its place in the world.

Paul knew what it was to suffer in the flesh, but he wrote, "For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." Who knows the extent of the influence of the life in the body upon the immortal soul? Who can tell of how much we should rob one if we should prematurely drive the soul tenant from its house of flesh! Because only God knows how man's experiences in the flesh work out an eternal weight of glory for the soul, he alone can exercise the rights of the Sovereign of life. As long as God spares life, life in the flesh must be considered a part of the development of the soul, and no man has the right to rob anyone of the influence of life in the body upon the immortal soul. "Thou shalt not kill."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LAW OF RESPECT FOR THE HOME

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Ex. 20: 14.

If the Ten Commandments give the laws of life in their logical order and in the order of their importance, as we have found reason to believe is the case, then we must conclude that next in importance to life itself God places the family, or the home, for the Seventh Commandment deals with the marriage relation which is the fundamental relation of the home. Next to the law of respect for life, God places the law of respect for the home. The Sixth Commandment deals with the life of the individual; the Seventh Commandment deals with the life of the group, or family.

In ancient Israel the family was given high place. The family was the unit of society. While emphasizing the importance and place and rights and obligations of the individual, Christianity also conceives of society and the Church as made up of families. “The universal Church consists of those persons, in every nation, together with their children, who make profession of the holy religion of Christ, and of submission to his laws,” says the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church. The Catechism lays stress upon the family, in the words, “Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible Church, are to be baptized.”

There are two reasons why respect for the obligations

of marriage, the fundamental relation of the family and the home, should be considered next to the duty of respecting life itself. The first reason is that life has its origin in the home and springs out of the home's primary relation, that of husband and wife. How can we respect life itself if we do not likewise respect that sacred relation out of which life springs?

While the extent of the influence of heredity is debated, and there is not unanimity of opinion concerning the extent to which character may be passed on from parent to offspring through heredity, there is no doubt anywhere that the character of the parent does profoundly influence the character of the child. "After their kind" is the teaching of Scripture and the teaching of science. If, therefore, we are to guard the sanctity of life itself we must guard the sanctity of that relation out of which life springs.

A second reason why the law of respect for the home follows the law of respect for life itself, is that the home is the most powerful of all the influences which bear upon the developing life of the child. There is more than sentiment in the old saying that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. First impressions are the deepest, and the plastic and developing life of the child receives its first impressions in the home. The language which the child speaks is the language of the home. In our day educators are coming to see again the fact that the hope of the nation and of the Church and of the world is the home, with its profound influence upon life and character. Yet, back yonder when Israel was in her infancy, God proclaimed, next to the sacredness of life itself, the sacredness of the home and the home's primary relationship—marriage.

The true home depends, so far as human relations are concerned, upon the love and the loyalty of husband and wife. The moral atmosphere which the child should breathe can be maintained in the home only by the mutual love and loyalty of the parents.

But when must this loyalty of husband and wife begin? Do the obligations which marriage involves begin with the marriage ceremony? Fitness for the marriage relation, and therefore for the relationships of the home, depends upon the whole life. It is in the sacred relations of the home that one reaps the rewards of the past's noble living. It is in the relationships of the home that oneself and others suffer the penalty of past dishonor.

The Seventh Commandment demands loyalty, from earliest infancy, to the highest ideals of the home. Every boy should look upon himself as a prospective husband and father, and should live his life with the purpose of being true to the highest Christian ideals for the home. Every girl should look upon herself as a prospective wife and mother and should live her life with the purpose of being true to the highest Christian ideals of wife and mother.

Only as we guard to the utmost the fundamental relationship of the home can we guard life itself for the next generation.

Next to the Christian faith itself, nothing is more worthy of heroic sacrifice than the home. "For hearth and home" is a motto to which God himself has given his approval in the Ten Commandments.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LAW OF RESPECT FOR PROPERTY

“Thou shalt not steal.” Ex. 20 : 15.

The life which has its origin in the home, and which is developed in the home and in the wider environment of society, dwells in the body of flesh. Because the immortal life manifests itself in and through a material body and is influenced in turn by the forces which reach it through the material body in which it dwells, the subject of property assumes importance even for those who emphasize the fact that their citizenship is in heaven. Others who give material possessions first place in their lives feel that the rights of property are as important as life itself. In the next world, as a world of spirit, “neither moth nor rust doth consume, and . . . thieves do not break through nor steal.” Our greatest treasures, therefore, are the treasures of character which will ultimately make one independent of material possessions that perish. But in this world in which man has his physical relationships, the things that belong to him have an important place. We have, therefore, for all men, the law of respect for property. Property has been defined as “anything that may be owned.”

It may be granted that for happiness we often depend too much upon possessions rather than upon the heart; but possessions, even to the spiritually minded, are important because of life's relationship to things and because of the influence of things upon life. The apostle John, who certainly did not overemphasize the material

world, wrote in his first Epistle, "But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?"

Because we can say "I," we should also be able to say "my." Consciousness of self relates us to material things and so we have the right to claim those things which concern us and our lives. "I" and "my" go together. But the moment we can say "you," because we are conscious of the existence of another personality, we must also learn to say "yours," for that second personality has the right of ownership of those things which concern his life. And when we can say "he" we must learn also to say "his." We can claim ownership for ourselves only when we are ready to recognize the ownership of others. So we have the law of respect for that which belongs to others. This simple law, "Thou shalt not steal," is far-reaching.

There are many ways of taking what belongs to another. We may by superior strength wrest it from his grasp and take it for ourselves. This is plain stealing. Or we may take it by stealth under cover of darkness or when the owner is unconscious in sleep. This also is plain stealing. Or we may take it by deception, leaving the owner no more aware of his loss than if we had robbed him in the dark or while he slept. This, likewise, is just plain stealing. Or by a legal process we may take what belongs to another; but if the thing we take, even by a legal process, really belongs to him from whom we take it, this also is plain stealing. The real question is, "To whom does the thing taken belong?" Whatever the process or method employed, if that thing belongs to another the act by which it is taken is stealing.



The transactions of business which constitute the process of exchanging property afford enticing opportunities to disregard the law of respect for property. The two properties which are exchanged are supposed to be of equal value, whether the exchange is by barter or by purchase with money. But the buyer or the seller may steal by deceit. He may exchange adulterated goods for the price of the pure article. He may misrepresent quality or grade, and thus take from the purchaser more than the property exchanged warrants. He may give short measure and in the process of exchange keep for himself something which really belongs to the other, and thus disregard the law of ownership. The workman sells his time to his employer. If he does not give the full measure of time purchased, he is stealing, for he walks off with the purchase price of time in his pocket and has not left the equivalent of time as the possession of him who hired him. The man who sells his skill but does not give the skill he agreed to exchange for wages has broken the law of respect for property, for his skill, exchanged for wages, belongs to the purchaser of it.

This important law of life would be observed with less difficulty and less confusion if we could keep in mind the significance of that word, "belongs." As soon as anything belongs to another it no longer belongs to us, and to keep it is breaking the law of respect for property which God declared fundamental to a well-ordered society, when he said, "Thou shalt not steal."

We have no right to take from God what belongs to him. We have no right to take from ourselves what belongs to us. We have no right to take from others what belongs to others. "Thou shalt not steal" applies alike to the proprietorship of God, of ourselves, and of our neighbor.

## CHAPTER X

### THE LAW OF RESPECT FOR TRUTH

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” Ex. 20 : 16.

God's world is a world of reality. The spiritual world is a world of spiritual reality, and, likewise, the material world is a world of material reality. Because God's world is a world of reality both spiritual and material, his world is a world of truth. If all that we had in the world were our impressions, without any facts back of those impressions as their true cause, we should not need to give a second thought to truth, but because we live in a world of spiritual and material facts and realities truth assumes great importance.

The God of reality is the God of truth. He is a God who cannot lie. So the writer of The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that God in making his covenant with Abraham swore by himself: “Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed with an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement.” The promise of the God of truth, confirmed by the oath of the God of truth, establishes his covenant as an unchanging and eternal reality.

Because God is a God of reality and a God of truth, he insists upon respect for truth as one of the fundamental laws of his world. In the description of God's Kingdom in Revelation, we read, “And there shall in no

wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie," and "Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie." The liar, who does not heed the law of respect for truth, belongs in the same class with those who do not keep the law of respect for life, or the law of respect for the home, or the law of the service of God only, or the law of the service of God spiritually.

The Ninth Commandment, in expressing the law of respect for truth, states this law in terms similar to the other laws which we have considered. We have found that the Commandments relate everything to life and personality. Home must be guarded because of the relation of the home to life and its development. Property is to be respected because possessions have their relation to and influence upon life or personality. So in this Ninth Commandment, which reveals the law of respect for truth, emphasis is laid upon truth as it is related to life. Thoughtful readers of the Ten Commandments have been surprised that there is no commandment which says simply, "Thou shalt not lie." But the Ninth Commandment, which declares, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," says in the most vital way, "Thou shalt not lie," for truth and falsehood have no meaning except as they are related to life and personality. Truth is important because truth influences life. The reason lying and misrepresentation and falsehood are so terrible is that they affect ourselves and our neighbors.

Would there be any difference between white and black if there were no sight? What difference does white or black make to the blind? What difference is

there between a true statement and a false statement if there be no mind to perceive it, no man to hear it, and no life to be influenced by it? Truth must be respected because lives are affected by the truth.

There would be no harm in adulterating food if there were no one to eat it. There would be no harm in selling mixed material as all wool if there were no one to wear it. No harm would be done by saying that three times ten make twenty-five if there were no person to be deceived by this misrepresentation of fact. There would be no harm in false religion if there were no souls to be misled by its teachings. Falsehood and lying and misrepresentation owe their importance to their relation to life and personality. So the Commandment reads, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" We must not lie or misrepresent because lying and misrepresentation will injure others.

The man who misrepresents facts is guilty of a great crime because facts have a vital relation to life. It would not be serious to hold and to teach that there is no such thing as disease if there were no disease germs, but because disease germs enter the human body and cause disease and imperil life, to deny the existence of disease germs and their consequences may result in an epidemic and in frightful loss of life. Inasmuch as God has built his world upon truth, when we utter falsehood we are bound to do injury to others. Our falsehood may injure their bodies, or their minds, or their souls.

All the sciences are based upon truth. Astronomy is built upon the facts of the stars. Physics depends upon the facts of the physical world. Physiology is based upon facts of the body. Optics rests upon the facts of light. The science of government is based upon the

facts of human relationships. Political economy is concerned with the facts of business. The science of medicine depends upon the facts of *materia medica* and the reactions of the human body. Philosophy handles the facts of experience. Religion is concerned with the facts of God and man. The whole fabric of our world in which we live depends upon truth. In a world where truth is thus enthroned, to misrepresent a fact is high treason. The psalmist must have had some such thought in mind when he wrote:

“Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?  
 And who shall stand in his holy place?  
 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;  
 Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,  
 And hath not sworn deceitfully.”

Or again:

“Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle?  
 Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?  
 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,  
 And speaketh truth in his heart;  
 He that slandereth not with his tongue,  
 Nor doeth evil to his friend,  
 Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor;  
 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised,  
 But who honoreth them that fear Jehovah;  
 He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.”

The scientist who falsifies his facts becomes an outcast from the world of science. The business man who misrepresents his goods becomes an outcast from the world of business. The witness who gives false testimony is forever discredited as a witness. The slanderer is despised. All this is because truth is fundamental to all the relationships of life. We need not be surprised

therefore that when God was giving to the people of Israel the Commandments on which their life was to be built, he revealed this fundamental law of respect for truth—"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

God's world and God's Kingdom are founded upon truth. "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it: and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie."

## CHAPTER XI

### THE LAW OF CONTROL OF DESIRES

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor’s.” Ex. 20 : 17.

Why did God give a Tenth Commandment to his ancient people Israel? Had he not in the nine Commandments already proclaimed the whole moral law? What other relation to one’s fellow man can be sustained besides those already considered? When we respect our neighbor’s life, and his home, and his possessions, and the truth which concerns him, what more can we do? Have we not already considered man’s whole duty to man? And yet God gave to Israel the Tenth Commandment.

There is reason indeed for this last Commandment of the Ten. Just as the First Commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” introduces the rest of the Commandments and proclaims the primary truth and duty which underlies all the Commandments, so the Tenth Commandment, “Thou shalt not covet,” concludes the statement of man’s duty to man by telling how these Commandments can be kept. The Tenth Commandment is essential to those which precede it, for obedience to the laws of life must begin in the heart. In The Proverbs we read:

“Keep thy heart with all diligence;  
For out of it are the issues of life.”

Conduct springs from the heart; deeds are the expression of desires. We can keep from doing wrong only if we curb the wrong desires which stir within the soul. Therefore God sought to write his laws of life upon the heart. Through Jeremiah the prophet he said, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." But this same truth God had long before endeavored to teach Israel when he gave them his Commandments, for he said, "Thou shalt not covet." The law must be written in the heart. The secret of keeping the laws of life is the control of desires.

The Tenth Commandment, we soon discover, reverts to the Commandments which precede it. The Sixth Commandment teaches the law of respect for life, and so the Tenth Commandment commands the control of the desire to take from another his house, the environment of his life, the surroundings in which he lives and moves. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," the Tenth Commandment continues—that is, no desires shall be harbored which would lead one to disregard the integrity of his neighbor's home. The Eighth Commandment teaches respect for property, so the Tenth Commandment forbids any wrong desire in the heart concerning a man's business ("nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant," who are his employees), or his machinery ("nor his ox, nor his ass"), or concerning his possessions ("nor anything that is thy neighbor's").

The Tenth Commandment makes clear the law of control of desires, a great principle which experience has confirmed. Leaders in the business world declare that what is needed if business is to prosper, is character. Judges who deal with lawbreakers and are concerned



with the enforcement of law, unite in saying that what society needs is character. Patriots and statesmen who face the problems of government urge that what our country needs is citizens and officeholders with character. Educators in discussing the aim in education come to the conclusion that the chief purpose of education is to produce character. Paul as a religious teacher declared that truth is "according to godliness"; the purpose of religion is to develop character, or likeness to God. But character, after all, is a synonym for the desires of the heart. What a man desires reveals what he is. The world's great need is men and women who are controlled by right desires. "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil." God made known this great truth to ancient Israel when he taught them that the secret of the keeping of all the laws of life is obedience to the law of control of desires. "Thou shalt not covet."

When Jesus, therefore, was asked, "What commandment is the first of all?" he answered, "The first is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." And to his disciples, he said, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."

A right heart is the secret of right conduct, therefore God made the final Commandment of the Ten a declaration of the law of control of desires. For if we keep our hearts with diligence, the issues of our lives will take care of themselves. "Thou shalt not covet."

## CHAPTER XII

### THE LAW AND GRACE

According to Socrates, the Greek philosopher, knowledge is virtue. This man, in whose life the inner voice of conscience was supreme, thought that men needed only to know the truth in order to do the right. But experience has shown that men need something besides a knowledge of duty in order that they may live as they should. We cannot solve the problem of vice by legislation, although legislation has its place in the suppression of vice. Neither is education the solution of the problem of sin, although education has its place in the development of character. To recognize, therefore, the fact that the Ten Commandments reveal the true laws of life does not mean to believe that the Ten Commandments are themselves the solution of the world's problems. Our duty to the world is not done when these laws of life have been taught even to all the world.

Out of his own rich experience, and supported by the experience of his nation which had inherited these laws, Paul said that there was something that "the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." The law is illuminating, but powerless. Therefore we have the gospel with its message of the grace of God. "God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The chart is important for the mariner. He cannot

plan his voyage and guide his ship without his chart. But the chart cannot propel the ship. The law is the chart by which we are to guide our lives. It points out the shoals and the rocks upon which lives have been wrecked, and it indicates the channels through which lives have been guided in safety. But the law does not provide power to live according to its directions. The road chart is invaluable for the motorist. It shows him the way to his destination. But the road map is not a substitute for gasoline to drive his car. The Ten Commandments are the guide to right living, but they do not enable us to live according to their directions. The gospel, however, is God's message of power, for the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." "Yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." We are "saved by grace."

The contrast between the law and grace sometimes leads to confusion. It has been said, for example, that because Christians are under grace they are free from the law, and that therefore they have nothing to do with the Ten Commandments. But when did Jesus—and therefore Christianity—ever repudiate the Ten Commandments? If the Commandments teach fundamental laws of life, as we have found that they do, how could they be set aside? Not one of them can be spared from the Christian's life or from Christian society. They are as true to-day as they were when they were first proclaimed. Being "under grace" does not make the laws of life inoperative.

When the New Testament teaches that "love . . . is the fulfilment of the law," it does not teach that the Ten Commandments are no longer the statement of how we ought to live; it emphasizes the fact that love is the only motive strong enough to lead us to live according to the Commandments. A right heart is not a substitute for a knowledge of right. Emotion cannot take the place of instruction. The desire to heal disease in order to prevent suffering does not render unnecessary a course in medicine. Nor does the noble purpose to build an orphanage to shelter homeless children make the philanthropist an architect and engineer. Parental love alone does not equip a mother to care for her child. Neither is the love of Christ a substitute for a knowledge of right and wrong. There may be "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." True converts need to be taught God's laws of life.

The Commandments serve two important purposes. They show us how to live and they show us how far short we have fallen of living as we should. So Paul said that the law is a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. He had in mind the pedagogue of the ancient Greeks whose duty it was to take the pupil to his teacher. The law, by showing us how far short we come of living up to the requirements of God, creates a sense of need of a Saviour. Thus the law reveals our twofold need—the need of pardon for past disobedience and the need of strength for future obedience. In contrast to the law, the gospel offers this pardon for sin and this strength for living. Thus in the law we find guidance, and in grace find pardon and power. "So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous,

and good. . . . For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do. But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good. . . . For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.”

In the law we find how we ought to live, but through the law we cannot find eternal life. Salvation is offered in the gospel of the grace of God. We need the law for guidance, but grace for salvation.



IV  
THE CHRISTIAN'S INSTITUTION

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues.” I Cor. 12 : 12-14, 27, 28.



## CHAPTER I

### CHRISTIANITY AND THE CHURCH

Christianity might be defined as the life of Christ in the lives of men. If we think of Christianity and the individual, we may define it as the life of Christ in the life of the individual. But if we are thinking of Christianity and the world, we may define it as the life of Christ in the life of society. Christianity is both of these, for when the individual is saved he has a saving influence upon society. This is what Jesus intimated when he compared his disciples to a lamp set upon a stand giving light to the whole house, or to a city upon a hill that cannot be hid, or when he called them the salt of the earth or the preserving influence in society.

One of the characteristics of any life principle is that it forms for itself a body. The life germ gathers to itself materials out of which it constructs the organism in connection with which it lives. Plant the seed in the ground and the life in the seed germinates; it gathers to itself materials which it forms into a sprout, and then into a stalk, which in time bears a head of grain. As Jesus said, there is "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear." The life in the seed has formed for itself a body. So Paul speaks of the soul and the spiritual body which by the power of God it will form for itself in the resurrection. "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some

other kind; but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own."

By its life processes the germ in the acorn forms for itself a body which we call a "tree," with its roots to search the soil for needed nourishment, the trunk to support the limbs and to carry the sap from the roots to the branches, the branches to hold the leaves which drink in rain and sunshine and air. The tree is the body which the tree life builds for itself.

So Christianity, which is the life of Christ in the lives of men, forms among men and out of human materials a body which is the Church. Of this body Jesus Christ is the head and source of life; Christians are its members. "Christ also is the head of the Church, being himself the saviour of the body." Concerning Christ whom God raised from the dead we read, that God "made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof."

The Church, then, is the body of Christ in which he manifests his life in the world.

The Greek word *ekklesia*, which in the New Testament is translated "church," means an assembly. The corresponding Latin word is *congregatio*, from which comes our word "congregation." The two words—"church" and "congregation"—are practically synonymous and mean the body of believers in Jesus.

The word "Church" is used in two senses. Sometimes it is used in the sense of the "invisible Church," which is composed of all true believers of all time. It is also used in the sense of the "visible Church," which is composed of all those on earth who profess their faith in Christ, together with their children.

A person may be a member of the visible Church and not be a member of the invisible Church, for the reason that it is possible to profess faith in Christ without having true faith in the heart. And one may be a member of the invisible Church without being a member of the visible Church, because true faith may precede the actual uniting with the visible Church by profession of faith. Only God knows who belong to the invisible Church of Christ, and in our discussion of the Church we must deal largely with the visible Church, or the Church on earth.

The Church on earth, then, is that visible body in which Christ manifests his life. The Church is the body which the life of Christ has formed for itself in the world, as the wheat life forms the wheat body and the tree life forms its tree body.

There is a striking likeness between the manner in which one of the simplest forms of life grows and multiplies and the manner in which the life of Christ grows in society. Those who have examined the microscopic form of life known as the *amœba*, have discovered that it multiplies by division. The *amœba* grows by absorbing materials from without, but it also contracts in the middle and the two parts at last separate, forming two *amœbæ*. Thus it multiplies by absorption and division.

So it is with the Church. In the days of the apostles

the Church grew by absorbing new members who, through knowledge and faith, came into living touch with Christ the Source of life. "The Lord added . . . day by day those that were saved." Thus twelve became one hundred and twenty, and one hundred and twenty became three thousand, and three thousand became five thousand, but all these were one body, or one Church. But after the death of Stephen "there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles. . . . They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." These Christians, separated from the mother church in Jerusalem, became centers of Christ's life in society and gathered to themselves believers in Jesus and formed other churches. So there were churches in Samaria, and in Antioch, and in other places. After the same manner the Church developed in America, for the Pilgrims, a part of the Church in Holland, which had been part of the Church in England, came to America and formed a Church. So also others came to our shores and established the Church. When the Church in this country sends a missionary to some foreign land, the Church is dividing its life in order that the part which goes to another land may become a center of life in that land and gather to itself lives to be touched by the life of Christ and become a Church in that foreign land. Thus the living Church grows by absorption and division.

If the Church is the body of Christ, and Christianity is the life of Christ in the lives of men, we may naturally expect to find that where Christianity goes the Church

goes, and where the Church goes Christianity goes. This is the testimony of history. Even those who criticize and withdraw from the external organization of the Church gather to themselves kindred spirits to form another assembly, or body, for the service of Christ. We find that a living Church means a vital Christianity and a vital Christianity means a living Church.

It seems scarcely necessary in view of these facts to say that the Christian has an institution to which he is related. Believers in Christ are members of his body, and his body consists of related working parts just as the human body consists of related working parts. As there are hands and feet and eyes and other members in the human body, so there are the members of the body of Christ with their various duties: apostles, prophets, teachers, helpers, rulers, and others. Every believer in Jesus, therefore, has a relation and an obligation to the Christian's institution, which is the Church of Christ.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CHURCH'S TASK

The thing to be done determines the character of the agency by which it is to be done. The task dominates the machine. Whitney invented the cotton gin because there was cotton to be freed from seed. Fulton planned and built his steamboat because there was a river to be navigated. Stephenson invented his steam locomotive because there was distance to be traversed. Bell invented his telephone because there was a demand for conversation at a distance. A factory is planned and built with a view to the product which it is to turn out.

The task and the machine of course may develop together—the cotton gin and the cotton industry, the steamboat and navigation, the steam engine and transportation, the telephone and distant communication, the factory and its product—but the fact remains that the purpose to be served really precedes and determines the character of the machine invented to serve that purpose. The desire to measure time existed before the watch.

This same truth holds good in the world of life. The purpose which is to be served shapes the tree which grows from the acorn. Its roots are to reach down into the soil to hold the tree and to gather the juices from the earth. The trunk is to hold the limbs and to carry the sap to the branches. The leaves are to gather rain and sunshine and air. The task which the tree has to perform in its environment determines the shape and

character of the tree. Such adaptation runs through the whole world of life. The finest machine, which possesses the closest adaptations which we know, is the marvelous human body. It has its great brain because man is to think and to control a complex body. It has its eyes because man needs to see, ears because he needs to hear, taste because he needs to select foods to eat, feet because he needs to move from place to place, hands because he is to make things, a digestive tract because he needs to be nourished, circulation because his body must be constantly repaired. The body is planned for the task that the personality which controls the body is to perform.

So it is with the Church, which is the body of Christ. We have a Church in the world because there is a task in the world. Christ had a purpose to carry out, and so he planned and organized the Church. The Gospels and The Acts tell of the organization of the Church. Jesus began to teach and to do his mighty works as signs of his authority and as a ministry to the needs of men; but he met with opposition. The purpose of Jesus and the purpose of the Jewish leaders came into conflict. The issue was at last clearly drawn. "And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him. . . . And he appointed twelve, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons." When others organized to defeat his purpose, Jesus planned the Church, which was to be his organization to carry out his purpose. The apostles were called in order that they might be in training for leadership in the Church.

If we should view the Church under the figure of a

building or the Temple of God, the apostles were the foundation stones, the first course in the walls of the edifice which was to rest upon Christ himself as the great Corner Stone. So when Peter was led to see the true nature of Jesus as the Son of God, and of his task as the Messiah and Saviour, and consequently made his great confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus said to him: "Thou art Peter [Greek, *petros*, a rock], and upon this rock [Greek, *petra*] I will build my church." Peter himself interprets the meaning of Jesus for us when he says of Jesus, in his First Epistle, "unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Thus Jesus began to build, or organize, his Church with Peter as the first stone because Peter was the first to confess his faith in him as the Christ and the Son of God. The other apostles soon took their places with him in the structure. Then other believers followed. "So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit."

So the building, the foundation of which Jesus laid with the apostles, has never been completed but is in continual process of erection. It is a living, growing Church, adapting itself to every age. Or, to use the



other figure, the Church is a living body, adapting itself to changing conditions. But the great task is unchanging.

Therefore in thinking of the Church we must think of the Church's task for which Jesus himself organized it and for which he continues to give it life and power through the Holy Spirit. We can understand the nature and work of the Church best if we understand the task which Jesus gave to the Church, and for which he planned the Church.

It is evident that Jesus established the Church to carry on to its completion the task which he himself began in the days of his flesh. Some things, of course, Jesus Christ himself did once for all, and these things the Church does not do. Christ alone could make atonement for sin. Christ alone can save. But it is the Church's task to make the unique work of Christ available for all men by bringing salvation within their reach. In this sense, Christ's task is the Church's task.

Jesus in his ministry did three things which the Church is expected to do in his name in the world today. Jesus was first of all a teacher. He came from heaven to bring God's message to men. To Nicodemus he said: "We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things? And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven." To his disciples he said, "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me."

Jesus, however, was more than a teacher who came from heaven with the truth for men: he was a witness.

A witness is one whose character supports what he says. So Jesus' life gave authority to his words. "Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?" The Jews sought to evade Jesus' teaching by defaming or denouncing his character. Jesus sought to prove his teaching by an appeal to his character. If his opponents could find no fault in his character, they were bound to accept his testimony.

Christ also appealed to his deeds as evidence of his authority as a teacher. His mighty works were signs of his authority and illustrations of the truth he taught. "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." Jesus' ministry to the needs of men gave power to his message of God's love and of salvation from sin.

The task of the Church is to continue this threefold work of Jesus. The Church is first of all a teaching institution whose task it is to give the gospel to the world. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!" So Jesus in the Great Commission said: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Like Christ, the Church is to be a witness. Jesus

said: "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The Church is more than a teacher in Christ's name, telling the world the truths of the gospel; the Church is a witness for Christ in the world, and as a witness the Church's character must give the ring of truth to its testimony. Witnessing is more than stating the truth; it is supporting the truth by the character of the witness. Some one has well said that the best argument for Christianity is the Christian. The Church's task, therefore, is not only to preserve and to declare the truth, but to build such character that the testimony of the church will be believed.

When Jesus appealed to his mighty works as evidence that he was the messenger of God, and said, "Believe me for the very works' sake," he went on to say to his disciples, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father." The Church is to show to the world the character of Christ by its Christlike deeds of service.

The task of the Church, then, is to teach Christ, to live Christ, and to illustrate Christ to the world. For this the Church was planned and instituted by Jesus himself. The Church is his body to do his work in the world, and for this work the Church has been peculiarly fitted, as is suggested by the words of Paul: "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues."

## CHAPTER III

### THE CHURCH AND THE TRUTH

The Church is first of all a teaching institution. It is in the world to make Christ and his truth known. When Jesus appointed the Twelve it was that they might be with him in order to learn to know him and his truth and then go out to proclaim him and his truth to the world. When he gave the Church the Great Commission, he said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." And so, in speaking of the Church as the body of Christ in the world to do his will and to carry out his great purpose, Paul said, "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers." Paul also emphasized the importance of the Church's work of proclaiming the truth, when he said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

The Church, then, is to make known Christian truth. Because the revelation of God has been preserved for us in the Holy Scriptures, the Church must make known their contents. Better far a few stumblingly spoken words than a perfect book locked in a safe. So the Church is a Bible-reading institution. In its services the Bible is opened and its sacred pages read. What John said of the book of Revelation may well be said of the whole Word of God: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy."

But if the Church is to be faithful to its teaching task,

it must do more than read the Scriptures: the Scriptures must be interpreted. Ezra the scribe and his helpers set a good example when they "read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading." So the task of the Church is not only to read the Scriptures, but also to interpret the Scriptures by making their meaning plain to all men.

The teaching duty of the Church has not been discharged, however, when the Church has explained the meaning of passages of Scripture. Teaching the truth is more than giving an exposition of Bible portions. When Jesus talked with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, and they were perplexed by his death and the many strange rumors that had come to them, "he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Jesus taught these disciples the great truth of the atonement and drew upon the Scriptures in support of his teaching. From the Scriptures he gathered together quotations and focused them upon the great truth which he was proclaiming. Philip followed the same course with the Ethiopian whom he found reading the prophecy of Isaiah, "and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus." "Jesus the Saviour" was the subject which Philip discussed, and he brought to bear upon that great truth the various statements of the Word of God. This was also the method of Peter on the Day of Pentecost. He used the Scriptures to illuminate and to apply the great Christian doctrines concerning Jesus Christ the Saviour,

repentance, and faith. This kind of teaching is commonly called preaching, and God has signally honored it. "The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation."

Because the teaching work of the Church is so important, the Church has its ministers who are set apart for leadership in this teaching service. Paul directed Timothy: "The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." As the Church in the days of Paul had its apostles, prophets, and teachers, so the Church to-day has its ministers who are especially trained for their task in the Church and are supported by the Church in order that they may give their full time to this leadership in the truth. That the minister may be equipped for his work he is usually required to graduate from a college where he receives a general education, and from a seminary where he studies those branches which fit him to be a teacher of Christian truth.

If the Church is to make provision for the teaching of Christian truth and to guard against the teaching of error, it is evident that some way must be found to assure soundness in the faith on the part of the Church's authorized teachers. If anyone who might choose to do so could appoint himself a teacher in the Church, the Church might soon drift away from the truth amidst conflicting teaching. James, the brother of our Lord, evidently had this thought in mind when he wrote, "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment." The truth is too sacred to be handled lightly. Too much depends

upon the proclamation of the pure gospel to the world for anyone and everyone to be permitted to assume the responsibility of being a spokesman for the Church. It is imperative, therefore, that the Church should not only make provision for the proper training of its teachers, but that when their training has been completed the soundness of their faith should be tested.

This is not a denial of the right of free speech. Any individual may say what he as an individual believes, but every Church, or denomination, has the right to make sure that its authorized teachers will teach the truth as it is held by the Church. So provision must be made for the discovering of the beliefs of those who are to become the Church's authorized teachers. Such provision was made in the days of the apostles by the custom of ordaining, or setting apart, those who were to speak for the Church as its messengers. Young Timothy was thus set apart. This is what Paul referred to when he wrote to him, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." So when the modern minister has finished his training for his great work as one of the Church's teachers of Christian truth, there is a court of the Church whose business it is to examine him in regard to his knowledge and his convictions concerning the truth. He is asked to declare his belief in the system of doctrine held by the Church.

The work of the Church as a teacher of Christian truth, however, is not done by the ministers only. The truth must be spread by every Christian. The growth of the Apostolic Church is not to be explained alone by the power which came upon the apostles, but by the fact that all believers were witnesses for Christ. So

the Church is a teaching institution in which every member is a herald of the gospel. The local church, therefore, has a teaching force, which is under the supervision and control of the authorities of the local church in order that the message of the church may be the true gospel of Christ.

Thus, so far as human oversight is concerned, the Church is organized for its task as a teaching institution established by Christ to give his truth to the world. With the truth preserved in the Scriptures, interpreted and proclaimed by trained and authorized teachers, and passed on to others by all who hear, the message of Christ is reaching the world.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHURCH AND CHARACTER

The Church is more than the herald of Christ; it is a witness for Christ. The value of the testimony of a witness depends largely upon his character. When Jesus' teaching was questioned, he challenged those who would reject his teaching to find a flaw in his character. "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" he asked. If his character could not be attacked he insisted that his testimony must be accepted. "If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?" The power of Jesus' message was not in the words which he spoke so much as in the character back of the words.

To his disciples Jesus said, "Ye shall be my witnesses." Because the Church is a witness for Christ, the character of the Church to-day takes on new importance. If the Church shows itself to be insincere or dishonest, or half-hearted, indifferent, selfish, cowardly, or immoral, how can the world be persuaded that it is the spokesman of Him who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" to save the world from sin? A corrupt and worldly Church loses its power to convince the world that its message is from God. If the Church is to fulfill its Christ-given mission in the world it must be a character-building institution. If the Church should merely proclaim the truth, even though the truth were proclaimed in its purity, it would fail of its purpose unless that message should bear fruit first in the Church's own life.

The truth of Christ is not proclaimed merely to make

men wise; it is proclaimed to make men wise unto salvation. The truth is not in order to intelligence; the truth is in order to godliness. The truth is not aimed exclusively at the mind; it is aimed through the mind at the heart and the will. Its goal is character. When the truth bears fruit in the life, that fruit does not consist of words fitly spoken, but in deeds rightly done. So James wrote, "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works?" And our Lord himself said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." So while the Church is preserving and proclaiming the message of truth, the Church must also be building, in those who believe, character which will convince the world that the message is true.

The Church therefore is more than an institution for the teaching of truth, and in connection with its assemblies there is found much more than the exposition of the Word and the presentation of the truth.

The very first New Testament characterization of the Church is in the words, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers."

Christian truth, which is what is meant by "the apostles' teaching," has character-building power. The milk and the meat of truth is what the soul feeds upon. Growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ go together in Christian experience. The Bible and character are vitally related.

Christian fellowship also has much to do with character-building. The play of one life upon other life has a powerful influence. The personality of Jesus had

even more to do with the remaking of his disciples than had his words. So the truth as it is embodied in the lives of men is a great character-building force. The Church offers this much needed Christian fellowship.

The sacraments, too, have their special place in character-building. The members of the Church were baptized and they continued steadfastly "in the breaking of bread." The sacraments of the Church with their character-building influences will be considered more fully in a later chapter.

United prayer has its place in deepening Christian life and in building Christian character. Private prayer in secret needs to be supplemented by the united prayer of Christians. This means of grace the Church affords in its meetings for worship.

The hymns of the Church have come out of the rich experiences of Christians of all ages, and these hymns have the power to kindle Christian emotion and to nourish Christian life and to strengthen Christian character. Singing the hymns of the Church together is a character-building exercise. They do more than express truth in rhythm, rime, and melody. The singing of hymns together in the worship services of the Church strengthens the heart and builds character. Well may Christians who really desire Christian character take heed not to forsake the assembling of themselves together with other Christians for the worship of God.

The practice of passing the collection plate in the churches has sometimes been made light of, as if the collection were the chief characteristic of the Church. But the service of giving has more to do with the building of character than is sometimes realized. "It is more

blessed to give than to receive." Through the unselfishness of giving the soul grows. The Church's cultivation of the grace of giving has no small place in the building of Christian character.

Paul has much to say about one Christian helping another in his Christian life. Some one has said that it is easy to stand up in a crowd because others hold us up. And so it is easier to live as a Christian when we are upheld by the example and the encouragement and support of many fellow Christians. The Church provides this Christian fellowship. Jesus said to Peter, "When once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren." So the fellowship of the Church helps men overcome their weaknesses. "Bear ye one another's burden, and so fulfil the law of Christ," Paul wrote to the church of Galatia. And to the church in Rome he wrote, "Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." Of the value of Christian fellowship so strong a Christian character as Paul said, "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine."

When we are thinking of the Church as a character-building institution we must keep in mind the two sides of this truth. First, we must remember that for the very reason that the Church is a character-building institution it cannot be made up of perfect characters. If the moment one becomes a disciple of Jesus he should become perfect, there would be no further need of teaching or of exhortation or sympathy or helpfulness. But because the convert is a newborn babe in Christ, the new Church member must be nurtured in knowledge

and faith and life. The Church is a hospital for sin-sick souls that must be nursed back into health. The Church is a school for the training of disciples of Jesus in Christian living and Christian service. Inasmuch as the Church has the task of developing Christians, perfection cannot be expected in its members. Even Paul declared: "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The Church, then, is a company of disciples of Jesus whose goal is likeness to Christ, and toward that goal they are running. And the truth, the fellowship, the ordinances, and the activities of the Church are planned to make it a character-building institution.

But the other side of this truth must be borne in mind also. Because the Church is not only the messenger of Christ in the world but also a witness for Christ, the Church must exhibit character to the world. Although made up of imperfect Christians it must show such progress in character development and must give such demonstration of the saving power of Jesus Christ, that the world will receive the Church's testimony. Paul, who said that the strong must bear the infirmities of the weak and who had much to say about the Church's duty to the weaker brother, was careful also to urge that the Church should be cleansed of those whose evil lives would bring reproach upon the name of Christ. While he said, "Admonish the disorderly, en-

courage the fainthearted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all," he said also, "I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators; not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world: but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat. For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves."

Because the character of the Church must be maintained in order that the Church may be a witness for Christ in the world, the Church exercises discipline and has its courts whose business it is to maintain the character of the Church by the rejection of those who by their ungodly lives bring reproach upon the gospel of Christ. The Church has a twofold duty: to nurture the weak in an effort to develop Christian character, and to cast out those who persist in ungodliness and so would bring reproach upon the name of Christ. There is abundant room in the Church for even the weakest sinner who desires to follow Jesus; but there is no room in the Church for the persistent and impenitent sinner who would make Church membership a cloak for his sins, and who would destroy the Church's character as Christ's witness in the world.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CHURCH AND SERVICE

The mighty works of Jesus were signs. In his Gospel, John wrote, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." Jesus himself said: "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me." "The very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." But Jesus had something to say to his disciples about their works also: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father." As Jesus did his mighty works, so the Church also is to do its mighty works in his name. And these works are signs that the Christ is in his Church, even as Christ's works were signs that the Father was in him.

What were the mighty works of Jesus? His greatest works were not the most spectacular. His miracles of grace were greater than his miracles of healing. This is the thought to which he gave expression when he healed the paralytic. He said first to him, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." And when the scribes called it blasphemy for Jesus to claim to forgive sins, in order that he might prove his power to do this greater work of healing the soul,

he said to the man sick of the palsy, "I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house." Greater than any of his miracles of healing was his work of making the great Apostle Peter out of the impetuous Simon, or John the Apostle of Love out of the vengeful Son of Thunder, or Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles out of Saul the Pharisee and persecutor. But in addition to his miracles of grace he did his mighty works of ministry to the temporal needs of men. He fed the hungry, he healed the sick, he gave sight to the blind, he enabled the lame to walk, he cleansed the leper, he cast out demons.

The Church's greatest work is the transformation of human lives. Its great miracles are the miracles of grace which are wrought by the power of the gospel in those who believe. The drunkard made sober, the thief made honest, the cruel man made kind and gentle, the idler set to work, the weak man made strong, the selfish man made unselfish—these are the chief signs that the Church speaks for God in the name of Christ. But, like Christ, the Church has its ministry to the everyday needs of men. The love of God must to-day manifest itself in a ministry like that of Jesus, who "went about doing good." John, who had caught the spirit of Jesus, wrote in one of his Epistles: "But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth."

The Church in the days of the apostles ministered to temporal need. "For neither was there among them any that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands.



or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need." And among the churches of the Gentiles, when they heard that there was famine in Jerusalem, collections were taken and the money sent to feed the hungry. The apostles also healed the sick. The appointment of "deacons" in the Church showed that the Church was developing an organization to minister to the temporal needs of men.

If there were no other institution to minister to human need, it would be the Church's task to meet every need of man. This is readily seen when the Church goes to a heathen land. The missionary does more than preach the gospel: he establishes schools, builds hospitals, erects orphanages, teaches industry. He ministers to every need of the people. But in lands where Christian civilization has brought schools and institutions of mercy, the Church is not called upon so directly to establish and to maintain institutions and organizations to minister to the temporal needs of the community. But the Church leaves such service unrendered only because other institutions are meeting these human needs. Where there is no other institution to minister, the Church must answer the call of need. Such "works" of the Church, in addition to its "mighty works" of transformation of character by the saving power of Jesus Christ, impress the community with the love of God, the sincerity of the Church as his messenger, and the truth of its message.

The Church, in the name of Christ, must render its community service as that service may be needed. At the same time it must be remembered that Jesus did

not come primarily to heal the sick but to save the sinner. His mission was not to feed the body but to feed the soul. His feeding the hungry was incidental to his endeavor to give them the Bread of life. After he had healed the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda he sought the man out to warn him, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee."

The example of the apostles must never be forgotten by the Church. When the work of caring for temporal needs became heavy "the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word."

A serious mistake is made when the Church fails to minister to the temporal needs of men, for by such ministry the Church reveals to the world the love of God; but it is a more serious mistake still for the Church to neglect its chief task of prayer and the ministry of the Word.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

Since Christianity is the life of Christ in the lives of men and the Church is the body which Christ has organized for himself among men, we should not be surprised if in the Church there should be two special rites or ceremonies one of which lays emphasis upon the beginning of the Christian's life and the other upon the development of the Christian's life. The Church, indeed, has two such rites or ceremonies which are called the sacraments of the Church. The first of these is baptism, the initiatory rite which marks the beginning of membership in the Church and is a symbol of new life in Christ. The second is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which symbolizes the sustaining and strengthening of the Christian's life through personal relation to Christ.

The name "sacrament" comes from the Latin word *sacramentum*, which was the oath of a soldier when he enlisted in the Roman army. So a sacrament may be considered as a sacred pledge. The Roman Catholic and the Greek Catholic Churches call seven rites sacraments. These are baptism; confirmation; the Eucharist, which is another name for the Lord's Supper; ordination; marriage; penance; and unction, or the practice of anointing the sick or the dying. But the Protestant Church gives the name "sacrament" to only two of these sacred rites—baptism and the Lord's Supper—on the ground that only these two were appointed and

commanded by Jesus as rites in the Church and as symbols of a spiritual truth.

Baptism with water into the name of Christ, or into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, belongs at the beginning of the Christian life and is the rite by which one is initiated into membership in the Church. The Jews were accustomed to ceremonial cleansings. In the Tabernacle and the Temple were lavers containing water with which the priests and Levites washed their hands and their feet, to remind them of their need of cleansing from sin before entering upon the service of God. Certain persons were forbidden to enter the Tabernacle or the Temple, "because the water for impurity was not sprinkled" upon them. Because there were these washings and sprinklings with water to signify cleansing, the prophets used this figure of washing in exhorting the people to repentance. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well," urged Isaiah.

In the days of Jesus' ministry the Jews practiced ceremonial washings which were intended to remind them of the holiness of God and of their need of cleansing from sin. "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the marketplace, except they bathe themselves, they eat not; and many other things there are, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brasen vessels." These ceremonial cleansings of the Jews were in the mind of the author of The Epistle to the Hebrews when he wrote, "Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled

from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water.”

This lesson of the need of cleansing which was represented in the sprinklings and washings with water in the Old Testament has been carried over into Christianity in the rite of baptism. This rite represents cleansing from sin. Because we are cleansed from the guilt of sin by Christ, who “loosed us from our sins by his blood,” the water of baptism represents the cleansing blood of Christ. But because the cleansing which we need is an actual cleansing of the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, the water of baptism represents especially the Holy Spirit who imparts to us a new nature. So baptism is a symbol of the new birth and of the beginning of a new life of obedience.

When Jesus commissioned his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, he commanded them to baptize the nations “into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” This command was obeyed by the apostles. On the Day of Pentecost, when the people, convicted of sin, cried out, “What shall we do?” Peter answered, “Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins.” “They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.” When Peter was sent to Cæsarea to preach the gospel to Cornelius, the Roman centurion, and the centurion and his Gentile companions believed and the Holy Spirit came upon them, Peter said, “Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?” “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of

Jesus Christ." So when the Ethiopian eunuch was led to believe in Christ, Philip "baptized him." Thus baptism was the rite by which these believers were initiated into the Christian Church.

The Christian Church, however, consists of professing Christians "together with their children." Peter said on the Day of Pentecost, "For to you is the promise, and to your children." Because children of Christian parents are members of the visible Church they receive this initiatory rite of the Church which speaks of their need of the new birth, of the new life which is imparted by the Holy Spirit; and their parents promise to teach and train them as followers of Jesus and members of his Church. Thus all baptized persons bear the name of Jesus as members of his Church.

Because baptism is the sacrament which initiates one into the Church of Jesus Christ and represents the beginning of the Christian life, the sacrament of baptism is received but once. But the Lord's Supper, the second sacrament of the Church, has to do especially with Christian growth through fellowship with Christ; and so this second sacrament is received again and again.

As baptism carried over into the Christian Church the Old Testament representation of cleansing, so the Lord's Supper carries over into the Christian Church, in a different form, another Old Testament ceremony, the Jewish passover.

On the night in which he was betrayed, which was the night before his death, Jesus was eating the passover with his disciples. He was eager to do something which would help them never to forget that the heart of the gospel is the cross. He wished to have his dis-

ciples remember his death as the "Lamb of God" to take away the sins of the world. The passover feast took the Jews back to the closing days of their bondage in Egypt when the death angel visited the homes of the Egyptians and slew the first-born but passed over the homes of the Israelites, whose houses were sprinkled with the blood of the lamb that had been slain. They ate the lamb in security, because its blood had been sprinkled upon the doorposts of their houses. So as Jesus and his disciples ate this memorial supper he took bread from the table and blessed it, and broke it, and passed it to them, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body." When they had eaten of the bread, he took the cup and said, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." Thus he looked forward to his crucifixion in order that afterwards his disciples should ever look back to his cross, for he said, "This do in remembrance of me." And the Apostle Paul, in writing of the Lord's Supper, added, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."

So this sacrament, instituted and commanded by Jesus as a memorial of his death, was celebrated by the Church in the days of the apostles. The first converts of the Day of Pentecost "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." "Breaking bread" was the phrase often used to mean the celebrating of the Lord's Supper, because the bread was blessed and broken. When Paul was in Troas on his way home at the close of his third missionary journey, "upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them." In his First

Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul corrected the members of the Church in Corinth for certain errors in their celebration of the Lord's Supper and told them how this should be observed.

Ever since the days of the apostles the Lord's Supper has been one of the chief ordinances of the Church, observed in obedience to the command of Christ. And it is in connection with the celebration of the Lord's Supper that baptized members of the Church are usually welcomed into full membership in the Church, when they declare their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Saviour, thus confirming for themselves the covenant made in their behalf by their parents. It is in connection with this service usually that those who have never been baptized are received into membership in the Church by baptism and confession of faith in Christ. Those who have been initiated into the Church by baptism observe the Lord's Supper and are thus reminded that it is by their relation to Jesus Christ that their spiritual life is sustained.

Every part of the Lord's Supper and its observance has a meaning. The bread represents his body, and reminds us that the Son of God took upon himself a true human body that he might as our substitute suffer for our sins. The breaking of the bread represents his being wounded for our transgressions by the nails and the spear. The cup represents his blood which was shed upon the cross, thus proclaiming the cross of Christ as the central fact of the Christian religion. Because we are nourished by food and drink, the bread and the cup of the Lord's Supper remind us of the great truth that we must feed upon Jesus Christ spiritually.

Three words of Jesus stand out in connection with



his establishment of the Lord's Supper, each of which has its message for the Christian. The first of these significant words is "take." Jesus said to his disciples as he offered them the bread, "Take" So Jesus offers to us himself and his work as our Saviour. Of this great fact we are reminded every time the Lord's Supper is observed. We are to take, or appropriate, Christ and what he has done for us.

The second word is "eat," and the corresponding word, "drink." The emblems of Jesus' body and blood are not only received by the hand but are eaten and drunk, and are thus assimilated. They enter into the life of the body. So Christ, who by the act of faith is taken as Saviour, is assimilated spiritually into our very life. So Paul could write: "For to me to live is Christ." "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me."

A third word stands out in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the word "remembrance." "This do in remembrance of me," said Jesus. Our remembrance of what Christ has done for us should lead to appreciation. Thus we have the three words which speak of duty: "appropriation" of what Christ has done for us and what Christ offers to us, "assimilation" of the life-giving and life-sustaining grace which is in Christ, and "appreciation" of what Christ has done for us. Appropriation brings Christ's life to us, assimilation brings the development of that life which faith has brought, and appreciation will lead to the use of our Christ-given strength in his service. "Till he come" we are to give ourselves to his service and to his cause.

As from baptism one is to go forth with the purpose of obedience, so from the Lord's Supper one is to go forth with new strength and with new zeal for service,

We feed upon Christ spiritually, not for our own selfish enjoyment but to find strength for service. Spiritually we do not eat merely to live, but we eat to find strength for work.

From the first Lord's Supper Jesus went out to do the Father's will. From each Lord's Supper which we observe we are to go forth with a quickened purpose to do God's will.

From the memorial of Calvary the Christian may well go out into the world with the words of the hymn by Rev. John E. Bode in his heart and upon his lips:

O Jesus, I have promised  
 To serve thee to the end;  
 Be thou for ever near me,  
 My Master and my Friend:  
 I shall not fear the battle  
 If thou art by my side,  
 Nor wander from the pathway  
 If thou wilt be my Guide.

O let me feel thee near me,  
 The world is ever near;  
 I see the sights that dazzle,  
 The tempting sounds I hear:  
 My foes are ever near me,  
 Around me and within;  
 But, Jesus, draw thou nearer,  
 And shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear thee speaking  
 In accents clear and still,  
 Above the storms of passion,  
 The murmurs of self-will:  
 O speak to reassure me,  
 To hasten or control;  
 O speak, and make me listen,  
 Thou Guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, thou hast promised  
To all who follow thee  
That where thou art in glory  
There shall thy servant be;  
And, Jesus, I have promised  
To serve thee to the end;  
O give me grace to follow  
My Master and my Friend.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE HEROISM OF THE CHURCH

The Church, as the body of Christ, bears "the marks of Jesus." The institution of Christ which he left in the world to carry out his great purpose, to which he gave his life, must share in his unselfish devotion to duty and his heroic self-sacrifice. As Christ "stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," where the cross awaited him, the Church is called upon to face hardship and trial and to press on unwaveringly in the path of service. As the gospel was first given to the world because Christ dared to die, so the gospel is kept in the world because his Church has the courage to dare to die for the truth which Christ left in its charge.

The words of The Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the Old Testament heroes of the faith apply also to the heroes of the Christian era: "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

(of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and holes of the earth."

The Christian Church began its work heroically. On the Day of Pentecost the disciples of Jesus mockingly called drunken men and scorned as believers in a teacher who had been executed as a criminal, dared to proclaim to those who had put Jesus to death that they had crucified the Lord of glory, and to call them to repentance and faith in this same Jesus as the Christ and Saviour. The thrill of victory when three thousand converts were won in a day and soon grew to five thousand did not make heroism unnecessary. The apostles were summoned before the authorities and commanded not to teach in the name of Jesus. But the apostles answered, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard. . . . We must obey God rather than men."

Stephen's loyalty stood the test of martyrdom. Then followed such bitter persecution that the Christian disciples of Jerusalem had to flee for their lives. But the persecution which they had experienced in Jerusalem did not silence them, for "they . . . that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word." Then the apostle James was beheaded by Herod. Yet the Church went on with her work of proclaiming and living the gospel of Christ.

The spirit of the Christian Church in the face of persecution is seen in the heroism of Paul who was "ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus," and who in the face of death declared: "I am already being offered, and the

time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing."

To John, who was exiled to the island of Patmos "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus," the Lord himself gave to the seven churches the challenge to him "that overcometh."

This does not mean that the Church is always engaged in strife and is always facing peril, any more than Jesus himself was always engaged in strife and was always facing peril. He had his times of retirement with his disciples. He had his seasons of rest in the quiet home at Bethany. So the Church has its rest even in the midst of struggle. But the fact remains that the Church is an institution whose very life depends upon its spirit of heroism. When the truth is threatened, the Church must stand unwaveringly for the truth at any cost.

The spirit of the Church is the spirit of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna in the second century, who, when he was commanded to renounce his faith in Christ, replied, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me an injury; how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" As he stood in the arena, surrounded by an eager multitude, he was again urged to renounce Christ, but he answered, "Hear me declare with all boldness, I am a Christian." And when the Roman proconsul threatened, "I have wild beasts at hand; to these will I cast thee, except thou repent," Polycarp replied, "Call them, then, for we are not accustomed to

repent of what is good in order to adopt that which is evil." When the proconsul urged, "I will cause thee to be consumed by fire, seeing thou despisest the wild beasts, if thou wilt not repent," the answer came, "Thou threatenest me with fire which burneth for an hour and after a little is extinguished, but art ignorant of the fire of consuming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. Why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt." And as the fires were kindled about him he prayed, "I give thee thanks that thou hast counted me worthy of this day and this hour, that I should have a part in the number of thy martyrs, in the cup of Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life."

The heroism of the Church is not only the heroism that endures persecution; it is the heroism that conquers sin. The time came when Christianity was no longer under the ban of Rome. In the fourth century the Emperor Constantine became a Christian and the Church was held in honor. But the struggle for the truth had to go on, now against the subtle and insidious influences of worldliness and sin instead of against persecution and death. Augustine of Africa now represents the heroic spirit of the Church. In him we see the conflict of Christianity with heathenism and false teaching and with the sins of the flesh that would strangle the soul. In Augustine's heart was a heroism as great as that of the martyrs. Would he give up his sins? Could he give up his sins? In his struggle with the evils that had gripped him body and soul he cried out: "How long, how long? To-morrow and to-morrow? Why not this hour make an end of my vileness?" Then in response to the word of Scripture, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the

lusts thereof," he began his new life of loyalty to Christ.

The Church has had to stand against the might of men. Typical of this kind of courage is Bernard of Clairvaux, small of stature and frail, who, in the days of the Crusades dared to face the gigantic and brutal Duke of Aquitaine and denounce the duke's mockery of the claims of Christ.

For the great principle of the authority of the Scriptures the Church has had to contend heroically. Wyclif, the champion of English liberty in the fourteenth century, exemplifies this courage. In his book, "The Truth and Meaning of Scripture," he declared that we are to find out what is true from the Bible and not from the pope, and that everyone has the right to think for himself and to decide for himself what the Bible means. He had the courage to translate the Bible into English, the language of the common people, and to send out what he called his "poor priests" to proclaim without temporal reward the simple Word of God wherever men would listen. Until his death he stood heroically for the truth as he saw it, but his body, reverently buried in the churchyard of Lutterworth, where he had preached, was not allowed to lie in peace. Thirty years later he was condemned by the Roman Catholic Council of Constance and the pope directed that his bones should be dug up and burned to ashes. This was done in 1428 and the ashes cast into the river Swift. As Fuller wrote: "This brook did convey his ashes to the Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow sea, and this into the wide ocean. And so the ashes of Wyclif are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all over the world."



The heroism of the Church is the heroism of loyalty to conscience. John Huss, the Bohemian preacher, who read Wyclif's writings, was persecuted first because he dared to denounce the immorality of the clergy of his day, but was finally condemned by the Roman Catholic Church on the ground that his teaching was heretical. When condemned he appealed from the decision of the pope to Jesus Christ, the true head of the Church. When urged to confess his "errors," as his teaching was called by the Roman Catholic authorities, he replied, "I do not wish to maintain any errors, but will humbly submit to the decrees of the council; but I cannot, without offending God and my conscience, say that I held erroneous opinions which I never held, and which I never had at heart." When, for conscience' sake, he was led to the stake to be burned to death, he prayed, "Lord Jesus Christ, I will bear patiently and humbly this horrible, shameful, and cruel death for the sake of the gospel and the preaching of thy Word." So the Christian puts conscience above life.

Before the Reformation loyal disciples of Jesus, representatives of the true Church within the external organization which was known as the Church, stood for truth and conscience; but when the sixteenth century came, this loyalty to Christ and his gospel organized itself into the Church of the Reformation which withdrew from the Roman Catholic Church after vain endeavors to reform the Roman Church itself. Because we live in a day of religious liberty we can scarcely appreciate the heroism of the men of faith who dared to withstand the authority of the pope. The papacy through the years had gradually assumed such power that the pope was the supreme ruler of the nations and by his bans

could bring to submission not only those within the Church but temporal rulers as well.

In Germany, Martin Luther dared to post his "Ninety-five Theses" which led to an open break with the papacy. The pope's bull of excommunication he burned. When brought to trial and commanded to retract his teaching, he answered: "Unless I am convinced by the Scripture and by right reason (for I trust neither in popes nor councils, since they have often erred and contradicted themselves)—unless I am convinced, I am bound by the texts of the Bible, my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I neither can nor will recant anything, since it is neither right nor safe to act against conscience. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise: God help me. Amen."

In Switzerland the Reformed Church was being nurtured by Zwingli, the brave preacher of Glarus, Einsiedeln, and Zürich, who dared to preach the Word of God and to expose the false teaching of the Roman Church and to wait patiently for the fruits from the seed of truth which he thus sowed. So the true faith was restored in Zürich. Characteristic of him were his words to his companions just before entering the one-sided conflict with the overwhelming forces of the Roman Catholic cantons: "Brave fellows take heart and fear nothing. We suffer, if we must, in a good cause. Commend yourselves to God, who is able to care for us and ours. God's will be done." Where he fell in battle is a stone bearing the words, "You can kill the body, but you cannot kill the soul."

The Protestant Church owes one of its greatest debts to John Calvin, the frail and timid Frenchman who sought retirement and study but who was challenged

by the vehement Farrel to throw himself into the struggle between Protestantism and Romanism in Geneva. "I am timorous and shy by nature," Calvin protested; "how, then, shall I be able to fight against those raging waves!" But because he was led to believe that this was the call of God he went to Geneva, where he taught and preached and organized the Protestant forces of the city. This timid man showed marvelous courage, the courage which conscience and the fear of God give. When opponents of the reformers in Geneva were fomenting trouble, and resentment against Calvin was at its height, he went into the town hall in spite of the drawn daggers that threatened him. "If you desire my blood—here it is!" he said. "If you want to banish me, I will go. And you may try once more to save the town without the gospel." On another trying occasion he announced: "As long as God permits me to stay here, I shall show the constancy he has granted me, whatever may happen. And I shall follow the line of conduct which my Master has made perfectly clear to me."

The Presbyterian Church of Scotland owed its life to men like John Knox, "who never feared the face of man," and "whose voice could put more life into his followers than six hundred trumpets blowing incessantly." Yet when he was called to the ministry such was his diffidence that he said, "Who am I, that I should undertake this great work?"

The revival of the true faith in England in the dark days of unbelief and terrible immorality was due to men like John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, whose courage and self-control when a mob tried to kill him won recruits for his cause. And the Church has

been spread by such men as Wesley, who during his ministry of fifty years traveled 250,000 miles. He rose at four o'clock in the morning and frequently preached at five. Often he spent twenty-four hours in the saddle and traveled ninety miles in a single day. He would press on though crusted with ice from head to foot, and when the road was covered with water he drove through the surf. He delivered forty-two thousand sermons—an average of fifteen a week.

The Church came to America through the heroism of men and women like the brave Pilgrims, the fugitive Huguenots of France, and the Presbyterians from Wales and Ireland and Scotland. We have a free Church in a free State because there were men like Francis Makemie who, when forbidden to preach in New York in the days of the Colonies, replied to the governor in the spirit of the apostles, "If Your Lordship requires it, we will give security for our behaviour; but to give bond and security to preach no more in Your Excellency's government, if invited and desired by any people, we neither can nor dare do."

The Church has gone to heathen lands because men dared to face discouragement and ridicule and difficulty and persecution in the spirit of Robert Morrison who, when the merchants on whose ship he sought passage to China scoffingly remarked, "And so you really expect to make an impression on the idolatry of the great Chinese Empire?" replied, "No, sir, I expect God to do so." So has Christianity ever been kept alive in the world by men and women of every walk and station of life who had the courage to stand for truth and right, to live truth and right, and to proclaim truth and right in spite of ridicule, hardship, persecution,

and discouragement, "of whom the world was not worthy."

"The Son of God goes forth to war,  
A kingly crown to gain;  
His blood-red banner streams afar;  
Who follows in his train?  
Who best can drink his cup of woe,  
Triumphant over pain,  
Who patient bears his cross below,  
He follows in his train.

"The martyr first, whose eagle eye  
Could pierce beyond the grave,  
Who saw the Master in the sky,  
And called on him to save;  
Like him, with pardon on his tongue  
In midst of mortal pain,  
He prayed for them that did the wrong;  
Who follows in his train?

"A glorious band, the chosen few  
On whom the Spirit came,  
Twelve valiant saints, their hope they knew,  
And mocked the cross and flame;  
They met the tyrant's brandished steel,  
The lion's gory mane;  
They bowed their necks the death to feel;  
Who follows in their train?

"A noble army, men and boys,  
The matron and the maid,  
Around the Saviour's throne rejoice,  
In robes of light arrayed:  
They climbed the steep ascent of heaven  
Through peril, toil, and pain:  
O God, to us may grace be given  
To follow in their train."

## CHAPTER VIII

### SHOULD ONE JOIN THE CHURCH?

Every sincere and thoughtful person who is interested in truth and morality must face the question of his duty to the Church. There are good people out of the Church as well as in it, but the moral ideals of these good people out of the Church they owe to the Church. A conscientious physician, who was not at the time a member of the Church, was asked where he got his high moral ideals. He replied, "In the Sunday school." But the Sunday school is one of the teaching agencies of the Church.

Salvation depends upon a personal relation to Jesus Christ. Joining the Church does not save us, for we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. So we do not join the Church in order to be saved. But faith in Christ unto salvation has been made possible for us by the Church; the message of the gospel has come to us through the Church.

The thoughtful person, therefore, who considers the importance of moral ideals, or who has for his own salvation accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour, must face the question, "What should be my attitude toward the Church of Christ?"

No thoughtful student of the teaching of Jesus Christ can evade the fact that Jesus insisted upon an open confession of faith in him. He gave no encouragement to secret discipleship. In connection with the account of the conversation with Nicodemus by night we find

in the Gospel by John these significant words: "He that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God." Jesus said to his disciples: "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven." The Apostle Paul wrote, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

There must be, therefore, an open confession of faith in Christ on the part of believers in Christ. The frank way—not to say the appointed way—to confess Christ is to ally oneself with the institution in the world which is known as his institution. The world knows the Church as the institution of disciples of Christ. The simplest way, then, to put oneself on record as a follower of Jesus is to join the Church.

There is a second great reason why everyone who would honor truth and stand for right should ally himself with the Church. The Church has maintained itself in the world only by the greatest heroism. We have our Christian privileges and blessings only because in every generation there were those who were ready to do and to die in order that this heritage might not be lost. If the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church, and through the Church we have received our Christian privileges and blessings, how can anyone with a spark of gratitude and appreciation fail to do his part to preserve this institution and to pass it on unimpaired to the next generation? What would we think of the man who having drunk when thirsty from the

spring and quenched his thirst, would give no thought to the next pilgrim to pass that way? What would we think of the citizen who would enjoy the blessings which his fathers have purchased for him by their patriotism and self-sacrifice, and yet ignore his obligation to preserve and to pass on this heritage to the next generation? Similar to this is the conduct of the person who thinks of enjoying the fruits of the Church's heroism in the days that are gone but who keeps on the outside of the Church himself and relieves himself of all obligation to maintain this great institution. What the Church has bought at so great a price must not be accepted as a free gift, with no obligation on the part of the recipient. How can we maintain our self-respect and at the same time accept a gospel which cost Jesus more than his life and which has been passed on to us at the price of heroic sacrifice, if we feel no sense of obligation to those who paid this great price? We must join the Church to pay our debt of gratitude to those who went before us, and to pay our debt of obligation to those who shall come after us.

There is a third reason why all those who believe in Jesus as Saviour must recognize their obligation to his Church. The Church is the army of Christ. When one joins the Church he is enlisting in the army of Christ for service. There is no room to doubt the fact that every believer in Jesus is obligated to pass on to others the truth he believes. Every disciple is to become a witness. The institution which has carried on the campaign of Christ in the world is the Church. If the world is to be won to Christ it must be reached by a campaign of evangelization which is organized and systematic. When Jesus undertook to feed the five thousand he



divided the multitude into companies of fifty and a hundred, and his disciples distributed to them the bread and the fish in an orderly way. The campaign to give the Bread of life to the world must be similarly organized. Everyone who believes in Jesus must ally himself with this organized army of Christ and do his share in personal service and by the dedication of his resources for the advancement of the cause of Christ. For anyone professing to love Christ to remain out of the Church, is as reasonable as for the one who professes to be a patriot to refuse to vote, to pay taxes, or to render service to his government when the nation's life is at stake.

Christ is at war with evil; the Saviour of the souls of men is in conflict with sin, with the power of death; the gospel is grappling with error and unbelief. Every believer in Jesus must "put on the whole armor of God, . . . For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints." We

must take our places and endure hardness, if need be, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

“Like a mighty army  
    Moves the Church of God;  
Brothers, we are treading  
    Where the saints have trod;  
We are not divided,  
    All one body we,  
One in hope and doctrine,  
    One in charity.

“Crowns and thrones may perish,  
    Kingdoms rise and wane,  
But the Church of Jesus  
    Constant will remain;  
Gates of hell can never  
    ’Gainst the Church prevail;  
We have Christ’s own promise,  
    And that cannot fail.

“Onward, then, ye people,  
    Join our happy throng,  
Blend with ours your voices  
    In the triumph-song;  
Glory, laud, and honor  
    Unto Christ the King;  
This through countless ages  
    Men and angels sing.

“Onward, Christian soldiers,  
    Marching as to war,  
With the cross of Jesus  
    Going on before.”





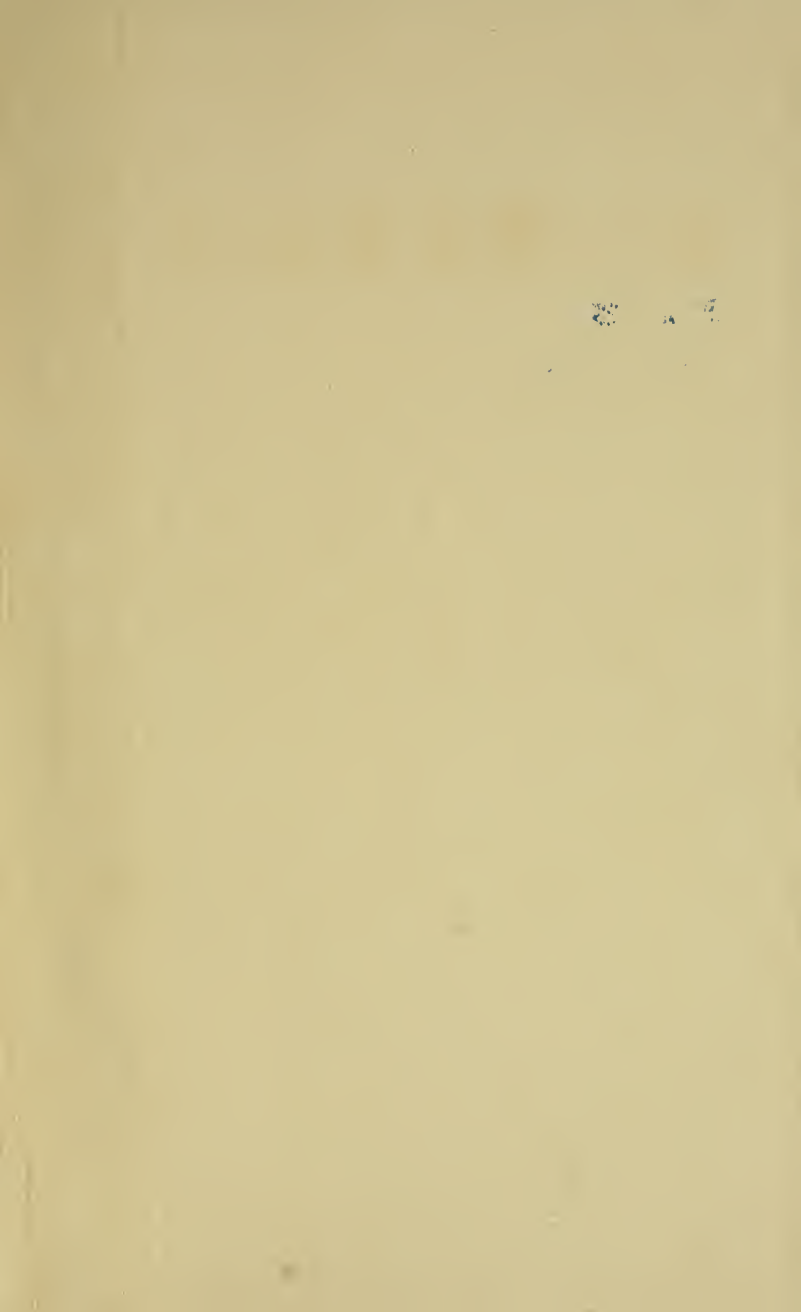


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